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THE

# MISCELLANEOUS WRITINGS

OF

# PASCAL;

CONSISTING OF

## LETTERS, ESSAYS, CONVERSATIONS, AND MISCELLANEOUS THOUGHTS.

(THE GREATER PART HERETOFORE UNPUBLISHED IN THIS COUNTRY, AND A LARGE PORTION FROM ORIGINAL MSS.)

NEWLY TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH EDITION OF

M. P. FAUGÈRE.

---

WITH INTRODUCTION, AND NOTES,

BY GEORGE PEARCE, ESQ.,

EDITOR AND TRANSLATOR OF "THE PROVINCIAL LETTERS, WITH VILLEMAIN'S ESSAY," ETC.

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"Un monument qui n'est qu'une œuvre de restauration, mais qui *durera*, puisqu'il enferme les reliques d'un des plus beaux génies qui aient honoré la France et l'humanité."—FAUGÈRE.

LONDON:
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS.

PAGE.

INTRODUCTION . . . . . vii

## LETTERS.

Editorial Notices . . . . . 3
Letter from Pascal to his Sister Jacqueline . . . . 5
Letter from Pascal and his Sister Jacqueline, to their Sister Madame Perier . . . . . 9
Letter from Pascal and Jacqueline to Madame Perier . 14
Extracts from Letters to Mademoiselle de Roannez.
Letter I. . . . . 20
Letter II. . . . . 22
Letter III. . . . . 25
Letter IV. . . . . 27
Letter V. . . . . 31
Letter VI. . . . . 34
Letter VII. . . . . 35
Letter to the Marquise de Sablé . . . . . 38
Fragment of a Letter to M. Perier . . . . . 39
Letter to his Brother-in-law, M. Perier, on the Death of M. Pascal, his Father . . . . . 42
Letter to Madame Perier . . . . . 60
Letter to Queen Christina, of Sweden, on occasion of sending her his Arithmetical Machine, in the year 1650 . . . . . 62

Digitized by Google

TREATISE ON THE GEOMETRICAL SPIRIT (or, as it was formerly entitled, The Science of Geometry in General, and the Two Infinitudes).—DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE SPIRIT OF GEOMETRY AND THE SPIRIT OF INTELLECTUAL ACUTENESS.—GEOMETRY—QUICKNESS OF INTELLECT.

PAGE.

Editorial Notices . . . . . 71
On the Geometrical Spirit . . . . . 73
Section First.—On the Method of Geometrical, that is, Methodical and Perfect Demonstration . . . . 74
Distinction between the Spirit of Geometry and the Spirit of Intellectual Acuteness . . . 97
Geometry—Quickness of Intellect . . . . . 100

A PREFACE TO THE TREATISE ON VACUUM, OR, ON AUTHORITY IN MATTERS OF PHILOSOPHY.

Editorial Notices . . . . . 105
A Preface to the Treatise on Vacuum . . . . 109
New Fragment of a Tract on Vacuum . . . . . 120

ON THE PASSION OF LOVE.

Editorial Notices . . . . . 123
On the Passion of Love . . . . . 129

ON THE ART OF PERSUASION, OR ELOQUENCE. (L'Art de Persuader.)

Editorial Notices . . . . . 147
On the Art of Persuasion, or Eloquence . . . 149

Digitized by Google

## THOUGHTS ON ELOQUENCE AND STYLE.

PAGE.
Editorial Notices . . . . . 171
THOUGHTS ON ELOQUENCE AND STYLE . . . . . 173

---

## MISCELLANEOUS THOUGHTS.

Editorial Notices . . . . . 189
MISCELLANEOUS THOUGHTS . . . . . 191

---

## CONVERSATIONS OF PASCAL:—ON THE CONDITION OF THE GREAT.—EPICTETUS AND MONTAIGNE.—DETACHED CONVERSATIONS AND REMARKS.

Editorial Notices. . . . . 253
DISCOURSE ON THE CONDITION OF THE GREAT. 1652-3 261
Discourse I. . . . . 263
Discourse II. . . . . 267
Discourse III. . . . . 270
CONVERSATIONS OF PASCAL WITH DE SACI, ON EPICTETUS AND MONTAIGNE. 1654 . . . . . 273
DETACHED CONVERSATIONS AND REMARKS.
Narrative of Discourses which I (Marguerite Perier) heard from my uncle, M. Pascal; not addressed to me, but to other persons, friends of his, in my presence. I was then about sixteen and a half years of age . . . . . 296



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THOUGHTS ON THE JESUITS AND THE JANSENISTS.—THOUGHTS AND NOTES FOR THE PROVINCIAL LETTERS.

PAGE.

Editorial Notices . . . . . 305

THOUGHTS ON THE JESUITS AND THE JANSENISTS . . 311

THOUGHTS AND NOTES FOR THE PROVINCIAL LETTERS . 338

THOUGHTS ON THE POPE AND THE CHURCH.

Editorial Notices . . . . . 369

THOUGHTS ON THE POPE AND THE CHURCH . . . . 371

Reflections on the manner in which Converts were formerly received into the Church; how they then conducted themselves; how they enter and conduct themselves in it at the present time . . . . . 384

CONVERSATION ON HIS WORK ON RELIGION.

Narrative of a Conversation in which Pascal related the Plan and Substance of his contemplated Work on the Christian Religion . . . . . 393

CONCLUSION . . . . . 401

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# INTRODUCTION.

THERE are few occupations in which we can be long engaged without experiencing some pleasing emotions, if they are even associated with others of a less agreeable nature. It is, therefore, not unnatural that, after having enjoyed an unalloyed satisfaction in the office of reproducing, to the public, in a former volume, the most finished composition of Pascal, the editor of that work should have continued to dwell with interest upon the copious, but fragmentary productions, which constitute that great writer's legacy to posterity. The valuable compilation of those writings which has recently appeared in France, under the editorial auspices of Mons. P. Faugère, has largely increased the pleasure with which he had been accustomed to regard those remains; and he has ventured to believe that he should be rendering to the English public, (at least to those who may not have made themselves acquainted with the original work,) a not unacceptable service, in bringing before them the compositions thus carefully collected, and reinstated in their original integrity, by that indefatigable editor. The



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present volume forms the first instalment of the proposed undertaking.

It is well known, that previous to the appearance of this edition, considerable doubts had been entertained by the learned in France, of the genuineness of the text of many portions of Pascal's posthumous writings; and, chiefly, of those so well known to foreign as well as native readers, under the title of the "*Pensées;*" and the materials for his projected work on the Christian religion. It is much to the honour of a literary public, no less than to that of the object of investigations of this description, that so ardent a zeal should be shown to preserve, or to reinstate in their former purity, after the lapse of centuries, the productions of their great writers. And most fortunate has it proved for the interests of literature, that this question was raised and brought to its present favourable result, before those political changes occurred which have recently agitated the French nation. It is not, indeed, among the least of the evils attending revolutionary convulsions, that they absorb men's minds in the exciting scenes of the moment, and produce an indisposition to the calm and ennobling pursuits of literature and science.

Mons. V. Cousin, whose reputation stands deservedly high for philological acuteness, was the first to call the attention of the public to the important discrepancies between the existing editions of the eminent author in

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question, and the original manuscripts of his writings, which are all still in careful preservation. His statements were embodied in a copious and astute report, addressed to the *Académie Française*, and read before that Body, in their sitting of the year 1842. In this report, he satisfactorily proved, on grounds which will hereafter be adduced, that variations, the most palpable, exist between large portions of those MSS., and the editions of Pascal's writings which have successively appeared during the period of nearly two centuries, that have elapsed since their first publication shortly after the author's death. In doing this, M. Cousin established, beyond all question, the position upon which his report was founded,—namely, the necessity of a new and improved edition of Pascal's Works.

Had this clever writer deemed it consistent with his duty to confine himself to the establishment of that proposition,—illustrated, as it is, with ingenious reasoning, and confirmed by examples taken from the writings themselves,—he would have conferred an important benefit upon literature. So far, however, from this being the case, M. Cousin has made his voluminous report to the learned body for whom it was prepared, a vehicle for controverting the opinions of Pascal, upon the most important of the various subjects which occupied his reflections. His aim has, indeed, evidently been, far less to reinstate the text of his great author, than to put a new

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and, till now, undiscovered gloss upon his sentiments; and a large part of his copious volume is, in consequence, occupied with charges,—to which, of all others, it might have been supposed the devout Pascal was least obnoxious, —of *sceptical* tendencies in his mind, desolate and consuming, — the spectre that haunted him in life, and harassed, perhaps, his dying hours!

To an English reader, who has been accustomed to place the "*Pensées*" of Pascal on the same shelf with his favourite writers in Theology,—his Leighton, Taylor, and Beveridge,—writers from whom he has derived his richest spiritual nourishment, and his strongest defences against infidelity; and in whose volumes the internal evidences of the Divine character of his religion come out to his mind with a force and energy more powerful even than any external proofs; such a charge as this—and against such a writer—must indeed appear astounding. Let him, however, be consoled: for the charge in question, supported by its learned author with much ingenuity of argument, and an imposing array of authorities, seems to amount, even by his own admission, to little more than this,—that Pascal, after investigating all the systems of philosophy, ended with an equal distrust of all; that he found no support for his capacious mind, but in the truths of a Divine revelation; and that he deemed the wisdom of this world only folly, in comparison with the wisdom of God. On M. Cousin's own representation, and in his

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own words, the design of that profound thinker was, to overwhelm all philosophy,—(especially the Carthesian, or that of Des Cartes, which is the object of this critic's especial admiration,)—to overwhelm all such human philosophy with doubt, in order to leave to the natural faith of man *no other* asylum than that of religion; and again, (borrowing also his own expressions,) "Pascal combated Des Cartes, and was sceptical like Huet, in order to conduct man *to faith* by the path of scepticism." To crown all, we have the critic's direct admission, that Pascal "was a sceptic only in philosophy, not in religion; that to assert the contrary would be an absurdity; for that he believed in Christianity with all the powers of his mind."—What those powers were, who needs to be informed?

Such allegations as these, although far less serious in substance than in word, were not likely, at a period when literature is little confined within geographical limits, to remain unnoticed elsewhere than in the circles in which they were brought forward. We, in this country, indeed, are not so easily dispossessed of old favourites, or cherished opinions, as our more versatile neighbours. But as there will always be some, upon whom specious theories and imposing pretensions,—especially when heard of from a distance, and broached in the circles of a foreign literature,—will make some impression, it is fortunate that writers of learning and polemical ability are never

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wanting to sift and scrutinize their real value. Some articles which have ornamented our periodical literature, and one, especially, that appeared not long since in a Journal of high reputation for learning and ability,* have furnished a full vindication of Pascal's fame against these vague and offensive charges. While the writers entirely acquiesced in M. Cousin's representations of the unsatisfactory state of the text of these writings, their arguments have equally succeeded in re-assuring any misgivings which might have been excited as to the soundness of their philosophical and religious views.

The able writers referred to, have now exhausted the controversy; and it would be needless—not to say presumptuous—to attempt to add force to their statements. To an unsophisticated mind, indeed, the history of Pascal's mental experience presents no mystery. At an age almost unprecedentedly early, he possessed himself of all the then existing stores of learning and science. He was acquainted with, but—as has been already observed—only to distrust, the systems both old and new of human philosophy, their elaborate speculations upon man, and their futile conjectures as to his everlasting destiny. He has left us his own solemn testimony, that he entertained views of life, of death, and eternity, such as he had not gathered from man, and such as neither Seneca nor Socrates could furnish. While he had

* Edinburgh Review, January, 1847.

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thus tested the insufficiency of human learning for real knowledge, he had been brought also to feel the emptiness of all that the world affords, for substantial happiness. He had thence been led, with the intenseness of a powerful understanding, and the eager aspirations of a restless spirit, to find satisfaction alone in that Revelation which the Creator has made to us, of secrets which man's unassisted powers could never have unlocked. He found himself impelled by the very necessities—as it were—of his nature, to the provision furnished in the Gospel for reconciliation with God, and repose of conscience; and in the great doctrine of his Redeemer's resurrection, he found the only solution adequate to his own conceptions, of the inscrutable mystery of man's eternal prospects.

How far a philosophy, such as M. Cousin's, could have sufficed to satisfy cravings of the spirit like these, and in what degree that gentleman is justified in challenging the opinions of a mind such as Pascal's;—in sneering at the ardour of his piety, and in disparaging (as in various instances he has endeavoured to do) the tendency of writings which he professes such anxiety to rectify;—may be inferred from the following passage, extracted from his book, and which forms, with others that might also be adduced, a species of confession of his own philosophical faith. The original is furnished below, lest it might be thought that strict justice had

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not been done in rendering this remarkable effusion:* "It is by the *aid of conscience*, and the permanent elements by which it is constituted, that, by a legitimate induction, we *elevate man to the knowledge* of the most mysterious attributes of the Deity. Man cannot apprehend anything respecting God, of which he does not possess, at least *a shadow, within himself;* for whatever of an essential nature he perceives in himself, he conveys, or rather he restores it to Him who has given it to him; and he can be conscious neither of his own liberty, or intelligence, or love, however imperfect and limited, without having an invincible conviction of the liberty, the intelligence, and the love of God, in the measure of infinitude."

Simpler reasoners have been accustomed to hold, that we are raised to a knowledge of the attributes of God by *His own* revelation, rather than by *our* conscience. At this point therefore we may, perhaps, well leave the controversy, between the scriptural theology of Pascal, and the philosophy of M. Cousin; and the reader will not be displeased now to be introduced to a commentator of a very different order.

* "*C'est à l'aide de la conscience et des éléments permanents qui la constituent, que, par une induction légitime, nous élevons l'homme à la connoissance des attributs les plus cachés de Dieu. L'homme ne peut rien comprendre de Dieu dont il n'ait au moins une ombre en lui-même: ce qu'il sent d'essentiel en lui, il le transporte, ou plutôt il le rend à celui qui le lui a donné; et il ne peut sentir ni sa liberté, ni son intelligence, ni son amour, avec toutes leurs imperfections et leurs limites, sans avoir une certitude invincible de la liberté, de l'intelligence, et de l'amour de Dieu, sous la raison de l'infinité.*"

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The true admirers of Pascal will deem it, indeed, fortunate, that the duty of supplying the desideratum of an authentic edition of his works should have devolved upon the writer, from whose able volumes the present compilation has been formed. After the discoveries which had taken place of the inaccuracies in former publications,—errors both of omission and commission,—an entire revision of the whole was loudly called for. It had become a literary necessity,—a want, which craved importunately to be supplied. M. Cousin himself,—for reasons which are not apparent,—had taken no steps for supplying the deficiency. He had invalidated the former text, but (except to the extent of a few selected specimens) had omitted to reinstate it with a corrected one. We have but to suppose that our own Bacon or Butler, instead of having transmitted to posterity their immortal works under their own revision, had left them in an imperfect and fragmentary state; that these writings had, notwithstanding, been collected with care, and the genuine text, as heretofore believed, handed down to ourselves; and then, that after the lapse of centuries, large portions of that text had been discovered to be not genuine, and important passages to have been omitted:—let us but carry our imaginations to such a catastrophe in our literary history as this, and we shall realize, in a measure, the dismay of our excitable neighbours, on finding that the greatest of their writers,—their Bacon,

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Newton, and Butler in one,—could no longer be studied in an authentic form; but that, on the contrary, all that had come down to them exhibited impoverished language, diluted sentiments, and a text from which many of its most energetic passages had been excised. In the emphatic style to which continental writers are addicted, they declared, that "they no longer possessed the '*Pensées*' at all: the book, indeed, was in their libraries, but Pascal himself was there no more."

It is this deficiency which M. P. Faugère has now supplied. That he has executed his office well, has been testified by the general voice of literary France; and it will now be for the English public (in so far as the present work may furnish them with the materials of a judgment) to say whether they confirm this approving verdict.

M. Faugère is already advantageously known as a writer. In his *Éloge* on the excellent Gerson, he has shown that he knew how to appreciate the piety and learning which have, from time to time, illustrated the earlier annals of the church of his country. He has, no less, brought to his present duties qualities which fit him for supervising the productions of a great and devout writer. His diligence and research are indefatigable. He enters with enthusiasm into the true spirit of his author; and, above all, he shows a quality, without which philological acuteness, and laboriousness of investigation, would have been valueless: he receives without

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cavil his profound views, and delights to illustrate and enforce his ripe lessons of wisdom and piety. The brief account which will subsequently be furnished of the manner in which the editor has discharged his duties, will confirm the testimony here borne to the value of his services; but it will be desirable previously to put the reader in possession of the curious vicissitudes, to which the writings of Pascal have hitherto been subjected.

The state in which a large portion of those fragmentary productions was left at his premature decease, is too well known to need here a description. That unusual condition of posthumous writings, however, should not be lost sight of, in estimating the difficulties with which those had to contend, upon whom devolved the office of bringing his works before the public. These persons, it is well known, were his devoted associates in Port Royal, aided by his attached friend and confidant, the Duke de Roannez. Out of the chaotic mass and congeries of abrupt and disjointed materials, which came into their hands, their objects were two-fold: the one, to expunge such parts as seemed to them, at that period, from whatever causes, unsuited to meet the eyes of contemporaries; the other, to produce with as little delay as practicable, a work which should interest and benefit the public.

In regard to the former of these objects, it may be

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questioned whether they did not, under the circumstances in which they were placed, exercise a sound discretion. Passages of controversial asperity, and denunciations of Jesuit-doctrines and practices, such as are scattered throughout the fragments in question, it would have answered no useful purpose *then* to bring forward. The battle had been fought; the reputation achieved by Pascal might have sufficed to satisfy an ambition far greater than his own; and the laurels he had won were waving gracefully over his early tomb. Such men, also, as Arnauld and Nicole, needed to furnish no further proof of their readiness for any efforts and any sacrifices, in the cause of truth, which duty might demand. But, at that period, a beneficial pause had taken place in the great controversy in which they had been engaged; and they justly deemed that the writings of their deceased friend and coadjutor would be more calculated for usefulness, if divested of that polemical severity which had pointed, with so true an aim, the reproaches of the Provincial Letters. It was thought to be equally inexpedient to retain numerous passages which showed that the writer's submission to papal supremacy, and some important points of Romanist doctrine, ("*au pouvoir de la papauté et à l'orthodoxie catholique,*") was already much shaken, and in process, perhaps, of entire dissolution.

There were other points, however, in which Pascal's

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literary executors showed a less sound judgment. The result, in fact, has proved that they fell into very grave mistakes. With the same obvious purpose,—to furnish to the world a work of more symmetrical proportions, and more methodical arrangement, than their materials seemed to them to promise, they took upon themselves, in various ways, to modify the original text; piecing unfinished and imperfect passages, omitting in some instances, and making additions in others; not, indeed, materially changing the sense, but depriving the composition of much of the freshness and originality, which the author's first conceptions exhibited. Yet let us not do injustice to these able and considerate persons. They were scarcely, perhaps, sensible of the high estimate which posterity would set upon these rough and unformed emanations of genius; and they were certainly unprepared for the jealousy with which, in a future age, a fastidious public might challenge deviations from the authentic text of a gifted and revered author. Nor did they show any want of concern for the reputation of their leader and friend, or any wish to save themselves labour in the duties they had undertaken. Their many conferences, and long correspondence, showed a full consciousness of the interest they felt in the office, and the importance they attached to its due fulfilment. They covered with decency and grace the relics which they honoured, and spared no efforts to

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embalm them for an immortality of fame. Their alterations were made with scrupulosity and care; and, if their additions are unequal to the text, it is only because no pen could approach to the force and eloquence of Pascal. The result, however, of their labours has proved justly unsatisfactory. The deeds turn out to be defective, and flaws are found to exist in our title. All parties, therefore, are agreed that the period is fully arrived for their revision and correction.

It is now time to resume our hasty sketch of the successive publications of these distinguished writings. But it is curious incidentally to remark, that, among the various relatives and friends who held council upon the plan of the first posthumous edition, the only person who opposed these unwise deviations from the original text,—these *benevolent* endeavours (as they are sarcastically termed by the present French editor) to improve and embellish the style of Pascal,—was his sister, Madame Perier, whose sound sense, and just appreciation of her brother's eminent powers, are so conspicuous in her own pleasing biographical memoir.

The result of these anxious deliberations was the first and incomplete edition of the "*Pensées*," which appeared in the year 1678. This was followed, at short intervals, by other editions, published under the direction of different members of Pascal's family, and successively furnishing considerable additions of supplementary

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matter. And the last that came out, under the auspices of his immediate relatives and friends, was that of 1687; which was introduced by the interesting memoir just referred to, but which had been purposely withheld previous to that period.

The next reprint deserving notice of these writings, was made in 1727, by the Père Desmolets, Librarian of the *Oratoire*, in Paris, which comprised, in addition to the "*Pensées*," the valuable papers containing the "Conversation on Epictetus and Montaigne," and the "Art of Persuasion." No material alteration, however, was made in the text of the former portion of the work; but the learned editor contented himself with adopting the whole, much in the same state in which it had been transmitted by his predecessors.

An epoch, in a certain sense important, in this literary narrative, is formed by the edition of these writings, put forth after the lapse of nearly a century from their first publication, by Condorcet; and which was shortly afterwards followed by one under the superintendence of Voltaire, accompanied with notes from his own pen. If proof had been needed of the importance attached by the leaders of infidelity to these remarkable productions, it would have been furnished by a procedure such as this. Had the writings of Pascal been distinguished only by the piety of their spirit and tendency, or even by their successful advocacy of revealed truth, they



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would have probably been left in an unmolested reputation. But they well knew that these qualities were shared, and, in their estimation rivalled, by their literary eminence, and philosophical depth; while they commended themselves to the general taste, by the most fascinating graces of diction and style. The lapse of years had not impaired their sway over public opinion, or their acceptableness to the public mind. Although, therefore, Voltaire, with his usual effrontery, affected a tone of contempt for these writings; and, to his correspondents, inculcated that they should express themselves in terms of "pity of *poor* Pascal," as a bigot, and enthusiast; he well knew that his Works stood as a rampart in their way, which must be overthrown, before their designs for the destruction of religion could be accomplished.

The proceeding these men adopted to effect this object was bold; but it showed, even on their part, a too confident reliance on the credulity of a public, whose principles they had not succeeded in wholly corrupting. While affecting a candid deference for Pascal's philosophical eminence, and an almost fulsome admiration of his literary elegancies, they endeavoured,—partly by gross perversions of the text, and partly by a running accompaniment of illustrations and notes,—to neutralize his holy principles, and his solemn views; and thus pretended to claim the most devout writer of a past age as one,—not opposed to, if not altogether an ally of their

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impious system! And when they had to deal with passages which did not thus admit of garbling or suppression, they did their utmost, by sarcastic comment and ludicrous associations, to neutralize the important truths which the text had enunciated. To see a profound and meditative writer in such hands as these, might suggest to fancy a statue of Minerva, decked out in the meretricious costume of a courtezan; or one of Raphael's seraphs, like "Maia's son," that "shook his plumes,"

"Till heavenly fragrance filled
The circuit wide;"

travestied and burlesqued, from a conception thus ethereal and divine, into the frippery and grimace of an antiquated petit-maître. The following may suffice as a specimen of the notes, with which Voltaire dared to insult a public still pretending to intelligence. It is appended to a passage in the "*Pensées*," which affirms the universality of complaints of unhappiness among all classes. "I know," says the commentator, "there is a satisfaction in complaining; that at all times men have boasted of the past, in order to disparage the present; that imagination has always depicted some golden age of innocence, of exemption from infirmity, of repose, and enjoyment, which exists no longer. Now, for *myself*, I leave my country residence for Paris; I find myself, on my arrival, in an elegant apartment, where a couple of hundred persons are enjoying exquisite music; afterwards the



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assembly disperse themselves into parties, and enjoy an excellent supper. * * * * I see in this city the fine arts patronized, and even the lowest artisans encouraged; sickness is relieved, accidents prevented; every one enjoys himself, or is about to do so; or hopes to do at some future time; and this last division is not the least happy of the whole. Then I say to Pascal, My eminent friend, are you anything better than a fool? I do not deny that the world has often been overspread with calamities and crimes; and we have had our share in these times. But it must be admitted, that when Pascal wrote, there was not so much to complain of: neither are we so very miserable now-a-days," &c. &c.*

The design of these bad men tended to its own defeat. The impertinent appendages of Voltaire,—written at a very advanced age, exhibited much malignity, but little talent. His wit,—the brightest of his intellectual qualifications,—was fast waning; and his eagerness for mischief ceased to be seconded by the force that had marked his earlier attacks upon religion. Condorcet, in the *Éloge* which he prefixed to his edition, treated the philoso-

* Not having, at present, access to the work itself, I have been glad to avail myself, for the purpose of translation, of the passage above quoted, as it is given in an elegant Review of Renouard's edition of Pascal, accompanied by Voltaire's Notes, which appeared many years since in a Periodical of the day, "The Christian Observer;" and is now known to have proceeded from the pen of the late accomplished Sir Robert Grant. For my own part, a cursory inspection of these Notes, a few years back, gave me all the knowledge of their contents that I wished to possess. The passage omitted contained allusions too *indecent* to be transcribed.

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phical eminence of Pascal with decent respect; although a spirit of petty rivalry is often apparent: and it is to him that we fortunately owe the publication, for the first time, of the fine tract upon "The Geometrical Spirit." It would be to waste words to comment any further upon his sneers upon what he ignorantly terms the "Amulet" of Pascal, which was also first explored, and triumphantly published by Condorcet on this occasion. The very slightest inspection shows to an unprejudiced eye, that this document is nothing more than the solemn communing of a devout spirit with its God, in some moment of unwonted and enthusiastic abstraction. The two editions were little known beyond the country in which they appeared; and they are now deservedly forgotten.

Such indecent schemes appear to have outraged the yet remaining good feeling in France. Within twelve months of the perpetration of these literary piracies, appeared the most complete and copious publication of the writings of Pascal which had ever been produced. The Abbé Bossut devoted himself, with diligence and intelligence of no ordinary kind, to the task of counteracting, by a publication in a different spirit, the efforts of infidelity; but at first, owing to the irreligious influences then prevalent in high quarters, was unable to procure the authentication of the work, which the restraints imposed upon the French press then rendered

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necessary. Influenced, however, by literary sympathy, the eminent Malesherbes, at that time Keeper of the Seals in France, assisted the editor to a species of evasion in the publication, by which it was made to appear to have been produced at the Hague, although, in reality, Paris was its birth-place; and thus all obstacle to its appearance was removed. The compiler of this edition had succeeded in procuring access to valuable manuscripts, which had not been previously consulted; and, in consequence of this, many interesting papers, unknown before, were now brought to light. Among these were the "Thoughts on Miracles," the tract on "Authority in Matters of Philosophy," "Preface to Vacuum," some additions to that on "The Geometrical Spirit," the "Conversation on the Condition of the Great," &c., &c. But Bossut, like his predecessors, fell into the error of omitting to collate these portions of the writings which he had adopted from former editions, with the original MSS.;—these being, in fact, the most important parts of the "Thoughts on Religion," &c.; and the consequence of this neglect was, that the text remained still in the same imperfect state in which it had been originally published.

From this period to the present time, other editions have, from time to time, made their appearance; but they are such as need no particular remark, and are no otherwise important than as they evince the undiminished

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pride and interest with which the writings of Pascal continued to be regarded by his countrymen.

It is now time to furnish a very brief account of the manner in which the present editor has discharged those duties which have devolved upon him from so many, and such variously qualified predecessors. His aims were, as stated by himself, to rectify the text of all the writings previously published; to add from original sources such as were previously unpublished; to make an entirely new arrangement of the whole, separating those parts which related to literary or moral subjects from others more exclusively theological; and, especially in regard to the fragmentary collection of thoughts which formed the materials of his projected "Apology for Christianity," to group them in such order and sequence as should appear most conformable with the scheme originally formed by its author. The extent to which these designs have been successful, will be apparent in the progress of this work.

The materials with which M. Faugère was provided for his undertaking, consisted of,—the autograph MSS. in the Royal Library, and a supplementary collection in the same Institution, containing chiefly the detached thoughts and materials for the "Apology;" copies of the same MSS. preserved at St. Germains, and elsewhere; Guerrier's collection of MSS.; and other manuscripts which had been preserved in private establishments,

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or by the care of individuals. Of the first and most important of these manuscripts,—those in the Royal Library,—the following account, gathered from the circumstantial description of the editor, will be interesting.

A folio volume of 491 pages (he says) contains these detached paragraphs, either pasted on blank pages, or, when the writing is on both sides of the paper, placed in a species of frame; and forming a vast assemblage of reflections of every nature, but chiefly on religious subjects. These, it is well known from the preface with which the original publication was introduced, were found, after Pascal's death, written upon paper of all sizes, bearing every appearance of haste, often in a hand almost illegible, and strung together in bundles, without the slightest measure of order or arrangement; in a state, in fact, of such utter confusion, that the pages forming a continuous composition are often reversed, and separated from each other by long intervals. "It is in these fragile tatters (*chiffons*)," M. Faugère strikingly remarks, "that Pascal has let us, as it were, into the choicest confidence of genius; human thought seems arrested in its very first formation, in all the freshness and vigour of early conception. As Montaigne said of himself with more affectation than truth, we see him speaking to his paper, with no other object than to relieve a brain full of ideas, and overflowing with feeling."

It is proper to state, that the zealous editor received

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much valuable countenance and aid, in his investigation of these various manuscripts, from the then accomplished Minister of Public Instruction in France, M. Villemain. Independently of the sympathy, which, as a man of high literary attainments, he could not but feel in such an undertaking, he had been himself a fellow-labourer in the illustration of Pascal's genius, and the editing of his great work, the "Provincial Letters;" and M. Faugère bears a warm testimony to the courteous attention and important assistance he thus derived from the Minister.

But the crowning success which awaited his labours, was the discovery of a large and valuable portion of original manuscripts in the possession of a contemporary, to whom they had been transmitted in a direct line from the relatives of Pascal himself. It is due to M. Faugère to give—but with some abbreviation—his own account of the happy accident which made this large addition to his valued stores.

"I had been informed," he says, "that there was living, at Clermont, (the place of residence of the Pascal family,) a Justice, or President, of advanced age, M. Bellaigue de Rabanesse, who, it was reported, had in his possession certain documents relating to Pascal; but that he had always refused to show them even to his most intimate friends; and no one had ever been allowed a sight of them. I determined, in consequence of this information, to repair to Clermont.



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M. Bellaigue resided in a secluded village at the foot of the mountains. His age exceeded eighty. He received me at first with reserve; but his confidence increased as our conversation proceeded; and it became complete, when he found that I had written "*Gerson.*" We soon found we were acquainted, although we had never met before; for we were united in sympathy and admiration of that eminent and holy man. "*Gerson*" was indeed my introduction . . . . . ; and when I further spoke of Pascal, and of the monument that I was engaged in erecting to his memory, he at once, and with eagerness, placed at my disposal the precious manuscripts which he had faithfully preserved during a period of above sixty years.

"It was affecting to see the zeal and ardour of this good old man, amidst his infirmities, when speaking of *Mons.* Pascal, or his sister Jacqueline, or of St. Cyran, or of the Mère Angélique. We seemed to be beholding and listening to one of the recluses of Port Royal, whose existence had been brought down to a succeeding age. Living in solitude, which he had sought through an excess of sensibility or fastidiousness," (feelings often mistaken, yet entitled to respect,) "as punctual in his devotions as an ecclesiastic; observing with scrupulous care all the anniversaries directed by Port Royal; living an example, to undevout times, of love to his God; and spending all that remained of his earthly existence in a

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preparation for eternity;—such was this aged man, whose death, which has but recently occurred, has taken away from us one of the last of the *Jansenists*."

M. Faugère has no need to apologize for the digression into which his enthusiasm for his aged friend has led him; for it is one which will commend itself to the sympathies of every reader. Nor less will they enter into his feelings of delight at thus discovering, in so unlooked-for a manner, some of the most striking fragments of the admired Pascal, with which these volumes are enriched. The rapture of the assembled *Literati*, on the unrolling of the precious Manuscripts, dug out of the lava of Herculaneum, could scarcely have equalled his; for an interest in Cicero was common to all the learned, but in Pascal the editor had acquired a species of fond proprietary. The acquisition was like the recovery by a doting parent of a lost child, or the advent of a new-born member to a happy family circle.

Of the manner in which M. Faugère has improved the ample materials thus placed at his command, it may be sufficient to state (and again in his own expressions) that he has examined every extant manuscript, page after page, line after line, syllable after syllable, from beginning to end, rigidly comparing every part with the various successive publications of these writings. The result is, that he has succeeded in effecting an entire restoration of the original text; supplying all that had

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been omitted, and excising every interpolation. But he has accomplished another object scarcely less valuable than this, namely, the making a clear and systematic arrangement of the chaotic mass of fragments of which these works consist, upon a plan which has been hitherto wholly unattempted. The degree in which he has succeeded in doing this will be the most apparent in the classification of the materials for the "Work on the Christian Religion," which will form a large portion of the contents of a subsequent volume. In the present collection, however, his labours will be seen to be not unimportant, in the happy method he has adopted, for separating the papers of a philosophical or literary nature from those upon moral or theological subjects. To all to whom the former collections of Pascal's writings are familiar, the contrast between the confusion with which these various topics are blended, and the lucid arrangement now observed, will be very apparent.

Want of space forbids more than a slight reference to one or two other topics which the French editor has treated in an interesting manner in his copious introduction. Enough has, perhaps, been said already upon the charges of the prevalence of sceptical tendencies in Pascal's mind, which M. Cousin has signalized himself by bringing forward. But it is right to show, that there are not wanting still, among his own countrymen, those who know how to resent the obloquy thus attempted to

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be cast upon an illustrious name, and to unfold, in an intelligent and devout spirit, the real sentiments of this master of true philosophy and religion. The following is a summary of his exposition; and of the grave, but temperate rebuke, which he has administered to the pseudo-philosophical accuser.

It has been customary, he says, to take two opposite views of the mind of Pascal;—one class regarding him as the subject only of a quiescent and unreasoning piety; the other representing him (and these, it will be remembered, are the seemly expressions of M. Cousin) as a prey to a *desolating* scepticism, and an *absurd* and *convulsive* devotion. These exclusive opinions, he continues, are *both* erroneous; and the amended text of his writings will now show (more clearly even than before) the high intelligence which Pascal's mind exercised both upon religion and philosophy.

Faith and reason may, indeed, alike claim him for their champion. If they were sometimes seen to hold contention in his mind, it is only that time was wanting to him to terminate the great work with which his thoughts were labouring, and to show these master-principles brought into harmonious combination. "Man ought to possess," he himself says, "three qualities;—that of the doubter, *(pyrrhonien,)* the mathematician, and the submissive Christian: these dispositions blend with and temper each other;—by doubting, when it is proper to

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doubt; by aiming at certainty, when necessary; by submission, when becoming." These decisive expressions contain the mental history of Pascal, and give a perfect portraiture of his spirit.

M. Faugère then traces the nature of his early associations, and his course of education; and he considers that these, together, tended to give a somewhat philosophical and latitudinarian bias to his mind in the early part of his career. His introduction into the aristocratic world, also, induced some relaxation of the serious habits, and devout spirit, which he had early imbibed. But his intercourse with the members of Port Royal soon corrected, under the blessing of Providence, these incipient evils in his principles and conduct. An infirm state of health, and the solitude thus occasioned, tended, also, progressively to bring him to a just estimate of the insufficiency of worldly enjoyments for happiness. "Pascal was, by these various means," it is then finely remarked, "brought again to seek his shelter in religion; his devotional fervours were rekindled; and, as the mariner in the heavings of the tempest clings closer to the mast, so, with redoubled eagerness, in the bitterness of a wounded spirit, he clung to the cross of his Redeemer."

"What, then, was Pascal's faith?" exclaims M. Faugère: "Did it possess all the rigour and implicitness of the Catholic church? This is a position which may,

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indeed, be maintained; it is one difficult to determine; and may not admit of absolute assent or denial. But this we may be allowed to assert,—and that upon an intimate communion with the author of the Pensées,—that he was endued with a profound conviction of the moral and philosophical excellence,—of the spiritual and divine pre-eminence, of the Christian religion. This is the faith which pervades his entire thoughts, and stills every mental conflict. He believes in Jesus Christ as the indispensable Mediator between God and man; as the regenerator of the soul; as the Saviour of the human race."

There are other features of the religious opinions of Pascal, which may be more appropriately considered in connexion with the contents of a future volume. Room can now, also, only be afforded for one more topic referred to by the French editor; but it is one which ought not to be omitted, as it has been made the subject of sarcastic comment on the part of his contemporary critic.

Allusion was made, in the short Memoir prefixed to the "Provincial Letters," to M. Faugère's conjectures in regard to the early attachment of Pascal for his youthful pupil, Mademoiselle de Roannez. The following are briefly the views he has put forward.

"Long before the discovery of his 'Discourse on the Passion of Love,'" he says, "and from the mere

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perusal of the letters of Pascal to Mademoiselle de Roannez, I formed my opinion of the nature of his sentiments towards this young female. Under the grave and severe restraint which the pious exhortations he addresses to her impressed upon his expressions, there is evident a tender solicitude on her behalf, which the ordinary feelings of Christian charity are not sufficient to explain.

"Charlotte Gouffier de Roannez was about fifteen years of age, when the close intimacy was formed between Pascal and her brother, the Duke de Roannez, which soon ripened into the warmest affection. A constant inmate with her brother, Pascal was, of course, continually thrown into the society of the sister; and to see her, what was so natural as that he should love? and, overlooking their disparity of rank, to aspire to a union with the possessor of charms so irresistible? Ambition also perhaps mingled with affection at the outset. Pascal was at that time not insensible to the influence of worldly motives; and an alliance with the sister of a peer of the highest rank would naturally appear favourable to his highest dreams of advancement."

Some passages are then quoted from the "Discourse on Love," which appears in a subsequent part of this volume; and which cannot but be considered as fully bearing out the theory of Pascal's romantic aspirations; and the editor then concludes as follows:—

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"Pascal had then, however, acquired little of the celebrity which afterwards awaited him. His position was not promising, and his rank greatly below that of the object of his attachment. All these circumstances concurred to oppose his hopes. It was then that he gave himself up more unreservedly to religion; to its devout observances, and sublime meditations. Who shall say," is the eloquent conclusion, a part of which has been before quoted, "that his earthly attachments being thus baffled, might not have been the cause of his subsequent devotedness to religion? And, after all, may it not be believed that his was a spirit of that order, which, finding no earthly object sufficiently faithful or large to satisfy its aspirations, turned to the Source of all excellence and all love, and sought the consummation of his hopes in Him, who is alone perfect, eternal, and infinite!"

There are those who may think a somewhat disproportionate importance is attached to this inquiry. It may indeed excite a smile to see a writer of M. Cousin's pretensions,—who amuses himself by repudiating the speculation of his contemporary, although he assigns, as the possible object of Pascal's affections, every female of rank or fashion then existing,—to find this philosophical investigator claiming little less than an immortality of literary fame, for the discovery of the "Discourse on Love,"—a paper which, with all its attractions, could perhaps have been more easily spared than many of these

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writings.* But who is there that needs to be reminded, that it is the private history of persons of intellectual eminence,—the vicissitudes of their domestic life, and even their individual peculiarities,—which constitute the most attractive portions of literary biography? It is never, indeed, wholly without interest to trace the play of the feelings, and the erratic course of adventure, among the most ordinary specimens of our race; and it is this which throws such a charm over the homely scenes in which the verse of Crabbe delights to expatiate; and gains resistless entrance to the heart for those domestic touches, and passages of rude but genuine pathos, which (mingled with much baser material) redeem the very unequal pages of a popular writer of fiction in our own day. But it is the prerogative of genius to ennoble passion; and to invest with an intense interest the occasions, when those, to whom we are prone to assign an almost impassable distance from ourselves, are seen quitting that exalted region,—subject to our common infirmities, and experiencing the same fluctuation of hope, joys, and sorrows, as ourselves. Who has not wished to attach personification and individuality to the great master of song; and to know that the name of Homer covered a man, and not an abstraction? What discussions have been raised respecting the real Laura who was the inspirer of

* "*Ce beau fragment dont la découverte inattendue emut les amis de notre grande littérature, et demeurera, s'il m'est permis de le dire, la récompense de mes travaux sur Pascal.*" Des Pensées: Avant-propos.

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Petrarch's impassioned effusions! Even the chequered scenes of Milton's home interest more than the great events of the Commonwealth, with which his political fame is identified; and that solemn vision which stole upon him, in the stillness of his bed, of his "late espoused saint," who

> "Came vested all in white, pure as her mind,
> And veiled her face;"

has wakened sympathy in many hearts which have traced the heroic achievements of his archangels without emotion.

Who, again, does not smile and sigh at the domestic grievances of the saintly Hooker;—his termagant wife, and his blended avocations of the cradle and the sermon? And what reader of the present day has not wandered spell-bound among those "Homes" of the poets,—those "haunts" of genius, taste, and refinement, which have been depicted by a pen, whose graphic powers it might be wished had never been exercised upon more questionable topics? We love, in the graceful page, to muse with Addison, beneath his solemn avenue; to sit by the side of Cowper, in his alcove; and to wander amidst those yet traceable shades where Shakspeare whispered his early vows to the gentle Ann Hathaway, or, in bitter remorse, confessed to her the deviations from duty of his after-years.

Upon the methods which have been pursued by the editor in his preparation of the present work, a very few

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words will be sufficient. It has been his endeavour now, as on a former occasion, to clothe in a dress not wholly unsuitable, and give "answerable style," in the *richest* of existing languages, to writings which form the masterpieces of the literature to which they belong. Pascal's diction possesses a beauty and delicacy which few who have not paid some attention to the original can conceive. It is characterized by a terseness and condensation, also, which are not of easy transference into another tongue; and in such instances as these, while no violence has been consciously done to the meaning of the writer, a considerable measure of amplification has been indulged in, as more suited to the flow and euphony of our language. And in the same way, no pains have been spared to provide suitable substitutes of our own, for that redundancy of idiomatic phraseology which sparkles in the original, the retention of which would have been unpleasing to a native ear. Considerable discretion has, also, been exercised in arranging the materials of the present volume, although the individual pieces have been subjected to little curtailment.

One liberty has, indeed, been taken with these writings, to which the editor feels it proper that he should advert. It has been of inestimable advantage to the interests of religion, that Pascal—doubtless, under the guidance of the Author of all wisdom—avoided, in the most important of his writings, any direct advocacy of the tenets of that

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church, in which he was born and educated. He taught *Christianity*, and not Romanism; and it is a striking fact, that the only controversial work he ever put forth, was directed against those perversions, in doctrine and practice, which had grown out of that most corrupt system of theology. Had the character of these writings been different, it may be permitted to the editor, without an unbecoming egotism, to say, that, grateful as they are to taste, and brilliant in talent, they would have found other hands to place them before the English public than those which have now ventured upon the office. A Protestant, producing a work to Protestant readers,—it seems to him to be no fitting province of his to put forth (although from the pen of another) errors which have been often refuted, or to revive questions which ought to be considered as set at rest, in a community enjoying the privileges of unalloyed scriptural truth. With these views, the very few passages which incidentally occur amongst these papers, containing either direct advocacy, or tacit approval, of some of the doctrines of the Romish church, are omitted. These passages (it is repeated) are few in number; their occurrence is wholly incidental; they are such as, if it had been consistent with the purpose of these pages to make them the vehicles of controversy, would have admitted an easy reply; and they are accessible in the original work, to any who may wish to test the correctness of the description here given of their nature.

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But (not to dwell at undue length upon this topic) if a mind such as Pascal's,—panting after truth,—consuming his days and his nights in a reverend study of its only pure oracles,—lifted up unceasingly, for the bestowal of the boon, to its only perfect Source;—if such a mind should not have been successful in the discovery of that truth, to the extent of his ardent aspirations, is it necessary, that these his short-comings should be recorded *here?* If, while ever asserting the authenticity and inspiration of Scripture, the necessity of a Divine Mediator between man and his Maker, and the "life and immortality brought to light in his Gospel;" if, while maintaining, with irresistible force, these cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith, he was not able to discern the spiritual nature of the Eucharist; to shake off the superstition of relics and modern miracles; or conceive of the possibility of virtue and piety growing up—apart from cloistered walls—under the open gaze of men, and within the bosom of the domestic charities;* —if these his "last infirmities," and the few remaining imperfections of a sincere but not wholly enlightened belief, still hung upon, and some of the bonds of a subtle and powerful church-polity still coiled round his

* In all the writings of Pascal, as far as my recollection serves, there is not to be found a single reference, direct or indirect, to the doctrines of purgatory, supererogatory merits, indulgences, or the worship of the Virgin, except for the purpose of *rebuking* the profanities to which those perversions had given rise.

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spirit; it is not necessary (it must be repeated) that these infirmities and imperfections should be transferred to pages designed for such as have been enabled to fling those mental fetters to the wind, and be mixed up with lessons fitted to benefit mankind, under every modification of faith, to the most distant times.

The editor has now one more office to discharge; but it is one to which he is no less prompted by inclination than by duty. It will have, doubtless, not escaped the observation of those who take an interest in literary intelligence, that, about two years since, an announcement was put forth, among the usual periodical notices, of a projected publication of the entire Works of Pascal, under the editorship of an individual from whose pen had recently appeared, in a distinguished periodical journal,* an article illustrative of the genius and works of that great writer. This notice met the eye of the present editor shortly after the publication of his own edition of the "Provincial Letters," and when he had just commenced active preparations for the present collection of the writings of Pascal. In consequence of this coincidence, some communications took place (through the medium of the respected publishers of this work) between the gentleman from whom the announcement referred to had emanated, and himself; the result of

* The Edinburgh Review.

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which communications was, that, with much courtesy and considerateness, the ground, which might have been thus so formidably pre-occupied, was frankly conceded; while the only stipulation was, that, on the appearance of the present work, an explanation should be furnished of the reasons which had induced the writer alluded to, to relinquish his proposed undertaking.

This explanation the editor hastens to offer. And in doing so, it may be permitted him, with much sincerity, to say, that if any additional motive could have been needed for the devotion of all the efforts of which he is capable, to render the present work not undeserving of public approval, it would be furnished by the consciousness that he is (to the extent of the more limited scope of this publication) occupying a place which, but for the arrangement alluded to, might have been filled by an individual, who could have brought to the duty qualifications of so distinguished an order.

*January*, 1849.

*(The Reader will please to notice that all the subsequent Notes, not otherwise designated, are those of the French Editor, or his predecessors.)*

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# LETTERS.



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# EDITORIAL NOTICES.

THE Letters here collected have not been before published, with the exception of portions of three or four of the number.

(*French Editor.*)

NONE of these Letters, excepting some well-known portions of that on "Death," addressed by Pascal to his sister and brother-in-law, on occasion of the loss of their father, have been, as far as I am aware, ever published in this country. The last-mentioned paper, also, has hitherto appeared entirely divested of those personal and relative allusions,—those tender remembrances, and fond aspirations,—which so gracefully relieve the more elevated parts, and throw an air of beauty and sweetness over the whole composition.

The few that were heretofore known in France,—especially the one just referred to, on Death,—were, on account of their grave and didactic tone, made the subject of sarcastic remark by the *beaux-esprits* of his own country, in a subsequent, but not improved, epoch of French literature. Such censure is consistent with the tastes of the parties from whom it emanated; for it was little to be expected, that letters breathing a supreme concern for the spiritual welfare of those most intimately connected with the writer, while overflowing, at the same time, with the tenderest affection, should find indulgence from such men as Condorcet and Voltaire, who, by an unheard-of literary fraud, endeavoured to make his sublimest work a vehicle for infidelity; and did their best (though ineffectually) to fritter down, by their perversions and comments, his weighty reflections, into levity and profaneness!

And to what does the cavil, in reality, amount? Pascal well knew both his powers and his responsibilities. His high vocation was to teach. He never took his pen—at least after that period when the Spirit of God had touched his heart, and rectified his judgment—but to lay down some truth, and convey some instruction, literary, moral, or religious. His



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letter-writing was apparently infrequent, and, through his many infirmities, laborious; and was he likely, when sending a rare, but precious token of affectionate remembrance, to relatives like-minded with himself,—some especially, who, like him, had not long been awakened to a sense of religion and duty,—to fill his letters with the mere topics of the day, or the gossip of the neighbourhood? And, when he lays aside the character of the instructor, and subsides into the relative or friend, where can be found in the treasures of epistolary writing extant, more pleasing specimens of simplicity of spirit, and ardour of affection?

The fragmentary series of letters addressed to his youthful pupil, Mademoiselle de Roannez, cannot be regarded without interest. Allusion has elsewhere been made to the recent speculations in regard to the nature of Pascal's sentiments towards his high-born and attractive correspondent. And surely, conjecture cannot but busy itself as to what was the complexion of those *commencements* and *endings* of his letters, which the severity or the prudence of Pascal's literary executors (one of them being his own friend, and Mademoiselle Roannez's brother, the Duke de Roannez) withdrew from the scrutiny of every eye but their own. That they were consistent in purity and moral beauty with the portions that remain, who that knows anything of Pascal's life and writings, can doubt? But, coupling the fact of these significant suppressions, with the passages in a paper given in a subsequent part of this volume, in which the bitterness of a hopeless and unrevealed affection is painted with a force that experience only can be believed to have supplied, the conviction becomes almost irresistible, that these excised passages must have contained indications of a deep, but self-sacrificed passion, which the parties referred to deemed not consistent with their duty to allow to be revealed to the world. It is a justifiable supposition, indeed, that, had they remained, together with the replies of this young and enthusiastic female, (which have been wholly suppressed,) we should have had exhibited in Pascal and his correspondent, the tenderness, but without the voluptuousness, of another Abelard and Eloisa.—(*Translator.*)

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# LETTERS.

## FROM PASCAL TO HIS SISTER JACQUELINE.*

My dear Sister, *26th January*, 1648.

We have received your Letters. I had intended to reply to the first, which I received above four months since; but indisposition and other circumstances prevented me. Since then I have been wholly incapacitated from writing,—partly by sickness, partly by want of leisure, and other causes. I enjoy, indeed, few hours of leisure and health together. I shall, however, now endeavour to complete the present letter; but whether it will be a long or a short one, I know not.

My principal object in writing at present is, to acquaint you with the particulars of the visits which you are aware I was about to pay,† and respecting which I hoped to be able to furnish you with some satisfactory accounts in answer to your letters. To begin then, I cannot but

* MS. Collection of Père Guerrier, p. 140.

† It is obvious, that this letter gives an account of Pascal's introduction to the Port Royal Society, which proved so important an epoch in his short but eventful career. The immediate occasion on which he writes seems to have been, the placing his sister Jacqueline in the convent connected with that establishment. (Transl.)



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express the great gratification I have experienced from them; my pleasure, indeed, has been such, that words cannot describe it. Be assured, that although I have not written before, not an hour has passed when you have not been present to my thoughts, and in which I have not indulged in desires for the accomplishment of the important design with which God has inspired you. My satisfaction has been increased by the letters I subsequently received, which showed that the project was still entertained; and I was delighted to see it going on without any communication from ourselves. This very circumstance convinced me that it rested on a divine support, and had no need of human aid for its realization.

I should, however, much wish to contribute such assistance as I can; but I have, alas! little capability of doing anything towards it. Such is my state of debility, that were I to make the attempt, I should show more zeal than discretion; and I am afraid we should both realize the case of the blind leading the blind. I have felt my incapacity far more since the visits in question were paid; and, instead of bringing away from them instruction for the service of others, I have gained nothing but confusion and distress for myself,—such as God alone can allay, and for the removal of which I must diligently exert myself; yet not with eagerness and impatience, well knowing that this would but remove me still further from tranquillity.

I say, that God alone can effectually restore my peace of mind, and that I must myself use means for this purpose; for I have only found my disquietude increased through those to whom I had looked for its alleviation;

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so that, being thrown upon my own resources, I had nothing left but to pray to God to prosper my endeavours. For this purpose I felt the need of communication with persons of wisdom, and of disinterestedness. The former class, however, will do nothing for me: I have, therefore, none to look to but the latter; and for this purpose I fervently desire to see you, for letter-writing on such occasions is tedious and inconvenient. Nevertheless, I must proceed with my correspondence for the present.

On my introduction to M. Rebours,* I was received by him with all the attention I could desire; for this, however, I felt I was indebted to his esteem for my respected father. After our first interchange of civilities, I begged to be allowed occasionally to repeat my visits, to which he assented: I shall thus have the opportunity of seeing him again, for I can scarcely call the present a visit. I remained, however, some time; and among other things I remarked to him, with my usual frankness, that we had seen their books, and those of their opponents; and this would probably be sufficient to apprize him that our views agreed with theirs. This appeared to afford him a certain degree of satisfaction. I then said, it appeared to me, that on mere principles of common sense, many positions might be demonstrated which their adversaries alleged were opposed to those principles; and that sound reasoning would lead to a belief in them, although belief ought to be yielded to them without the aid of reasoning.

* A disciple (or pupil) of the Abbé Saint Cyran, and one of the Governors of the Port Royal of Paris.

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These were my expressions; in which I thought there was nothing that could violate the strictest modesty. But, as you are aware, all our actions may proceed from mixed motives; and my remarks might have been regarded as arising from a vain and overweaning confidence in my reasoning powers,—a suspicion increased, perhaps, by his knowledge of my mathematical propensities. Whatever was the cause, my conversation seemed to cause him somewhat of surprise, which he evinced by a reply so marked by modesty and humility, that it could not have failed to rebuke any feelings of presumption against which it had been directed. Upon that, I endeavoured to explain to him my real meaning; but my excuses seemed only to strengthen his doubts, and appeared to him to imply an obstinate adherence to my own views. So beautiful, however, was his discourse, that if I had been indulging in the feelings he suspected, it must have had the effect of subduing them; but as I was not conscious of such thoughts, I persisted in opposing his correctives. Still, the more I sought to evade his reproof, the more determined he became in administering it; and the more my acknowledgments testified that I did not feel the need of his warnings, the more tenacious did he become in enforcing them. Thus our whole interview passed in a kind of equivocation (*equivoque*) and embarrassment, which continued during our subsequent communications, and have not yet subsided. There is no need to particularize all that passed on these occasions; I will, however, in a future letter* give you the substance of our conversation.

* This letter has not been preserved.

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Now let me particularly request you not to draw any unfavourable conclusions from what I have related, for I may not have been as accurate as I ought in my description; and this might, perhaps, give rise to disadvantageous and unjust suspicions. For, after much reflection, I come to the conclusion that there is a degree of obscurity in the matter, which makes it dangerous and difficult to decide respecting it. For my own part, therefore, I entirely suspend my opinion, both from a consciousness of my own infirmity, and from a want of sufficient information.

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## FROM PASCAL AND HIS SISTER JACQUELINE, TO THEIR SISTER MADAME PERIER.*

*1st April*, 1648.

We cannot tell whether this letter is to be interminable like our others; but we know that if we were to follow our inclinations, our letters to you would have no end. We have just received M. Saint Cyran's letter, "*De la Vocation*," which has been lately published without "sanction or privilege," and has given great offence to many. We are now reading it, and will send it afterwards to you. We shall be glad to have your opinion upon it, and that of my respected Father.† It is a fine production.

* MS. Coll. Guerrier, p. 109.

† "*Monsieur mon Père*,"—this elegant manner of respectfully designating a relative in the French language, can, I apprehend, only be rendered as is done above, although it has an air of formality. (Transl.)



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We have several times begun to write to you; but I have been deterred by the example and language, or (more properly, perhaps) by the repulses, with which you are acquainted: yet, having now come to an understanding, as far as possible, upon these points, I apprehend that, if there was a time when some degree of caution was required, and occasions when it was necessary for certain topics to be avoided, we may now dispense with these reserves. We entertain from this time no suspicion of each other; we feel convinced, that in our communications we are seeking only the glory of God, and have no selfish aims; and I see no reason to doubt that our views and wishes are directed by Him. If to these considerations we add the ties of nature, and, yet more, the bonds of grace which exist between us, so far from needing an excuse, we shall feel an obligation imposed by them upon us; for, to me, the blessedness of such a union appears so great, that we are bound to feel mutual gratitude and joy on account of our privileges. It is, in fact, only since that period which M. de Saint Cyran considers we ought to call "the *commencement* of life," that we can properly regard ourselves as relatives; and we may believe, that God has henceforth united us in our new creation by His Spirit, as we were already *one* by the ties of blood.

We beg then, you will never allow a day to pass without gratefully revolving in your memory the dealings of Divine Providence with us in thus uniting us, not only as members of the same family, but as children of one parent; for you are aware that our father is acquainted with, and has concurred in our design. We ought

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herein to be filled with admiration, that God has given us both the type and the reality of this union; for, as we have often remarked to each other, things corporeal are only images of those which are spiritual, and things visible of the invisible. This reflection is of such general application and usefulness, that it cannot be too much dwelt upon. We have, in fact, heretofore made the connexion of these things the subject of especial remark, and it is therefore the less necessary now to enforce it. The subject is too copious for a letter, and too interesting and important not to be habitually present to your memory. For, as our sins keep us immersed in things sensual and earthly, and as those again become, not only the penalty of our guilt, but the occasion of fresh offences, we ought to make the very degradation into which we have fallen the instrument of our restoration. In this way we shall derive advantage from the goodness of God, in leaving before our eyes mementoes of the privileges we have forfeited, and surrounding us, in them, with instruction and warning.

We may, in this view, regard ourselves as criminals, whose prison is filled with memorials of their liberator, and with directions by which they may obtain relief from their confinement. Yet must it be acknowledged, that we cannot perceive these sacred symbols without the aid of a divine illumination; for, while all things are eloquent of God to such as are acquainted with him, and reveal his perfections to all who love him, those very things tend to obscure him from those to whom he is unknown.*

* Pascal has enlarged this consideration in subsequent passages of his *Pensées.*

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Thus we see worldly men following the objects of this life with blind insensibility, immersing themselves in them, and making them, by a species of sacrilege, their sole aim and desire; whereas it is God alone who ought to be our final object, as he is the only source of our existence. Whatever degree of resemblance created beings may bear to their Creator, and however earthly objects, the most insignificant and worthless, may (in their unity at least) serve to represent that perfection of unity which is only to be found in the Divine Being, yet must we not entertain towards them an unqualified regard; for nothing is so offensive to God and man, as that idolatry which consists in giving to the creature the honour due only to the Creator. Scripture abounds with instances of the displeasure of God against this crime; and the first commandment of the Decalogue, which includes all the others, forbids, above all things, the worship of his images. As, therefore, God is far more jealous of our affections than even of our reverence, it is evident, that no offence can be more hateful to him than that of attaching a supreme love to his creatures, even though they may, in a measure, serve as representatives to us of himself.

Therefore it is, that those to whom Jehovah has revealed these important truths, should avail themselves of such representatives, to lead them to the enjoyment of Him of whom they are the shadow; and not remain perpetually in that carnal and Judaical blindness, which substitutes mere figure for reality. And they whom God has, by regeneration, freely redeemed from sin, (which is a virtual annihilation, inasmuch as it is the very oppo-

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site of Him who is the true source of being,) in order to bestow upon them a place in the Church, which is His temple; they being thus gratuitously restored from non-existence to their original privileges in creation, and their proper place in God's universe, are under a double obligation to serve and honour him. Both as created beings they should fulfil their appointed destiny, and improve the position assigned to them; and, as Christians, they ought unceasingly to aim to be worthy members of the body of Jesus Christ. Nay more, when we see mere persons of the world seeking to discharge their duties with a kind of limited perfection,—inasmuch as the perfection of the world itself is in the same degree limited,—the children of God ought surely to know no bounds to their purity and their perfection; since they form part of a body wholely divine, and infinitely perfect. It is thus that our Saviour assigns no limit to his law of perfectness; and proposes to us an infinite model, in saying, "Be ye also perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect."

It follows then, that it is a prejudicial, but a too common error among Christians, and even among those who make a profession of piety, to believe that there is a measure of perfection sufficient for safety, beyond which it is not necessary to aspire. It is an absolute evil to stop at any such point, and we shall assuredly fall below it, if we aim not to advance higher and higher.*

* In the hand-writing of Mademoiselle Pascal. (Note of P. Guerrier.) It appears by an unpublished letter of Jacqueline, that one of her principal occupations, when residing with her brother in Paris, was to act as his amanuensis. The manuscript, therefore, of this and the following letter is in her hand-writing; but the style and sentiments are evidently Pascal's. He was then twenty-five, and Jacqueline twenty-two years of age.

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## FROM PASCAL AND JACQUELINE TO MADAME PERIER.

*Paris, 5th November, (afternoon,)* 1648.

DEAREST SISTER,

YOUR letter recalled to mind a misunderstanding, which had quite passed from our recollection. The explanations we have now received (a little too emphatic perhaps for the occasion) have made the matter of our complaint appear quite insignificant—a mere old story; and the satisfaction they afforded has allayed the annoyance which my father had experienced. We have already said all that you say, without knowing you had anticipated us; and, in fact, have unconsciously done by words what you did by writing. We really knew nothing of what you had been doing till after we had done the same thing ourselves; for, as we concealed nothing from my father, he acquainted us with all that had occurred, and by that means entirely relieved our suspicions. You are aware how these kind of things tend to disturb the peace of a family, both internally and externally; and how important on similar occasions those explanations are, which in this instance you have given us,—although, perhaps, somewhat too late.

We must now turn to the subject of your letter. The first is, your remark as to our having instructed you in the points upon which you wrote to us. Now, first of all, I do not remember having said anything about the matter, and equally little, that it was a topic of any novelty

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between us; and, further, if it had been so, I fear you would not have received the communication to good purpose, unless you had forgotten the party by whom it was imparted, and regarded God alone as your instructor. If the matter in question appears to you of any value, you cannot regard it as derived from any other source than him; for neither you, nor any one else, can enjoy anything good but at the hand of God only. For if, even in these kind of acknowledgments, we do not entirely stop short at man, as if he were the author of the benefit, instead of the mere channel of its reception,—still there is in this a partial opposition to God's purposes, especially in the case of such persons as are not wholly purified from those carnal feelings, which lead men to regard as the source of good the persons alone through whom the good is conveyed.

Not that we ought not to acknowledge with gratitude obligations to those from whom we receive instruction, when they are authorized to communicate it,—such as parents, ministers, or teachers; because they then occupy the place of masters, and we of disciples. But as to *ourselves* it is otherwise; for, as the angel refused the worship of one who, like himself, was merely a holy servant of God, we feel it right to entreat you not to employ towards us such flattering expressions of human acknowledgment, remembering that we are nothing more than mere learners, like yourself.

Another remark contained in your letter is, that it is not necessary to repeat to us these things, because we know them already. This induces us to fear that you do not sufficiently distinguish between the nature of the

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matters to which you refer, and the mere passing topics of the day. As to the *latter*, it is doubtless quite enough to have once heard and retained them; but not so with the *former*. They must be impressed upon our minds by an internal and divine influence; and not merely perfunctorily committed to the memory. We may, indeed, get by heart, and remember as easily, an Epistle of St. Paul, as one of the books of Virgil; but the knowledge and the impression thus acquired are a mere effort of memory; while, in order to enter into that sacred language, which is an unknown one to those who are not taught of Heaven, we need the same grace which first opened the understanding to instruction, to preserve and retrace it continually in faithful and docile hearts;—in the same way as God, by the diffusion of his own grace, continually renews and prolongs the blessedness of the faithful; and as, according to the doctrine of the church, the Father perpetually produces the Son, and maintains the eternity of his essence by an effusion of his substance, uninterruptedly, and to all eternity.

In the same manner, the perseverance of the faithful is only the result of a continued supply of grace; and not of such grace as, when once imparted, ever after subsists of itself;—which shows us our perpetual dependence upon divine mercy; for if that be once suspended, we are instantly reduced to inefficiency and barrenness. Such being then our need, it is evident that we should continually renew our endeavours to obtain these fresh supplies. For grace, once possessed, is only to be retained by the acquisition of more; in the same way as, if we attempt to enclose a certain portion of light, we find we

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hold nothing but darkness. Thus we should be always vigilant in maintaining the purity of our spirits, which are prone continually to contract new defilement, while they retain that which is old; and can never, without such careful renovation, be fit to receive the "new wine" which ought not to be put into "old bottles."

For this reason, you should never hesitate to bring before us matters that may be familiar to the memory, and ought to be fixed in our hearts; as it is unquestionable, that a communication of that nature is more conducive to edification than a mere impression resting in the memory. Grace is especially the gift of prayer; and your affection for us constitutes a prayer of that kind, which ought never to be intermitted. In the same way, we should never indulge a disinclination for hearing or reading sacred things, however common and familiar they may be; for our memory, as well as the instructions committed to it, are like a mere lifeless body, without the vivifying influences of the Spirit. And it often happens, that God makes use of these external means to impress his lessons upon us; and in making us thus recipients of his grace, to subdue our vanity and self-confidence. Thus, a book or a sermon of the most ordinary description, will sometimes produce more effect upon those who receive their instructions in a teachable spirit, than the most eloquent discourse, heard with the liveliest interest and delight. And we sometimes find that those who thus listen in a right mind, although ignorant and insensible before, will be touched with the mere hearing the name of the Almighty, or by a few words that convey the threat of eternal punishment,

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although these may be all that find admission into their darkened minds.

The last thing that requires remark is, that you say you only write upon these subjects, that we may know the views you entertain respecting them. Now, here we would desire both to commend and to thank you: we offer our commendations for your perseverance, and thank you for the proof of it which you have thus furnished us. We had already, to our great satisfaction, received similar assurances from M. Perier. We cannot better express the pleasure this has afforded us, than in telling you to represent to yourself what would be your own joyful feelings, in receiving similar testimonies from ourselves.

We have nothing very particular to say, except upon the plan of your house.* We well know that M. Perier throws his mind too heartily into anything on which he is engaged, to give deep attention to *two* objects at once; and that the design is so large a one, that he will be little able to attend to any other while he is occupied with this. We further know that this is only a plan for a portion of the house; but, besides that this one part is very extensive, it will draw him on to the completion of the rest, when opportunity shall offer, however determined he may be to the contrary; and thus he will be still engaged in further plans, at a time when it would be desirable for him to be weaning himself from the secret attractions which such objects supply. For this reason, we have recommended him to build upon a far less

* A country-house which M. Perier was building, and which is still in existence at Bienassis, in the entrance of Clermont.

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extensive scale, and no more than necessity requires, although upon his present plans; by which means he will not be too much absorbed in his projects, and will be able in due time to desist from them. Let us request you to think seriously upon this matter, and to make up your mind to second our advice, lest he should be led into imprudences, and should be found bestowing more care and pains on building his earthly house, than on the raising of that mystical edifice of which, you remember, St. Augustin speaks in his letter. Adieu.

B. P.——J. P.

*Postscript of Jacqueline.*—I hope shortly to be able to write to you about my own affair very particularly; in the meantime, pray for a happy termination.

If you are acquainted with any pious spirit, let him pray for me also.*

* This last paragraph is in Pascal's hand-writing.

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## EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS TO MADEMOISELLE DE ROANNEZ.*

### LETTER I.

1656.

. . . . . .

I now purpose to answer the several points upon which you address me, although my time is limited.

I am delighted that you admire the work of M. de Laval,† and the "Meditations on Grace." I draw from this the most favourable conclusions for the object I have at heart.

I send you the particulars of the "condemnation" which seems to have alarmed you: it is, God be praised! a matter of no importance; and it is a miracle that nothing worse has come of it, seeing the enemies of truth had both the power and the will to act oppressively.‡ You

* Second MS. collection of M. Guerrier, p. 117. These extracts, which are also found in the MSS. *Supplém. Franc.*, both of the *Oratoire* at the Royal Library, and, in part, at the Library of Troyes, are without date.

† The Duke de Luynes published under this name several devotional works, among others, a "Literal and Mystical Paraphrase of the Psalms," in 1630. That is probably the book alluded to.

‡ This evidently refers to the condemnation of Arnauld by the Sorbonne. The date of this letter must therefore be assigned, as is done above, to 1656. Those that follow seem to be of the same year, except the latest, which are perhaps of the beginning of 1657.

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yourself are, perhaps, one of those to whom God shows his goodness, by continued protection, and by not taking you away from an undeserving world; and he thus gives you an assurance that you may still benefit the church by your prayers, if the church has benefited you by her's. For it is the church, together with Christ, (from whom she is inseparable,) that meritoriously procures the conversion of all who are strangers to the truth; and then, it is the part of those who are thus converted to give their succour to the parent, into whose bosom they are brought.

M. du Gas has spoken to me this morning of your letter with unbounded astonishment and pleasure: he cannot tell where you have learned such language as he mentions to me; and reported other things which surprised him,—but *me* they surprise no longer. I begin now to be accustomed to mark the signs of divine grace displayed in your experience; yet, in reality, they produce always in *me* even the pleasurable effect of novelty. For the continued flow of the graces of the Spirit is what the Scripture compares to the swelling waves of a river, and to the perpetual emission of beams from the sun, which are always new, and which, if for an instant suspended, all his previous splendour would disappear, and nothing but darkness remain. He told me that he had commenced a letter in reply to yours, and would transcribe it to make it more legible, with some additions. But he has this moment sent it to me, accompanied by a note, in which he says he has not been able either to transcribe or enlarge it: this makes me fear it will prove to be very ill-written. I can, however, testify to the little

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leisure he enjoys, as well as to his wish that he had more for your sake.

I enter fully into the pleasure the affair of the . . . . * has given you, for I see how interested you are in all that concerns the Church. Your obligations to her are indeed deep! For *sixteen* years she has sighed for you. It is now your turn to sigh for her, and for all her children, and to devote to her all of your life that remains; seeing your Redeemer only assumed his mortal life to yield it up again for *you* and for *us all!*

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## LETTER II.

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I have not heard how you took the loss of your letters. I much wish that it may have been as it ought to have been. It is time to begin to judge of good or evil according to the will of God, who cannot be unjust or undiscerning; and not by our own will, which is ever prone to sin and error. If these have been your feelings, I shall be much pleased, inasmuch as you will have received consolation from a better source than that which I am about to furnish you,—which is, that I believe they are found again. That of the 5th has been already brought to me; and although it is of little value, (for that

* In the MS. of the *Oratoire* this blank is filled up by the words "of the Nuns."

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of M. Du Gas is of far greater,) its discovery leads me to hope the others will be forthcoming also.

I know not why you should make it a subject of complaint, that I have written nothing for you: I make no difference between you *both*,* and have you alike continually in my thoughts. You see plainly, that my other letters, as well as the particular one in question, had considerable reference to yourself. In fact, I cannot help saying to you that I could wish to be infallible in my opinions: you would not in that case come off amiss, for I have much reason to be satisfied with you; but my judgment is of little value. I say this with reference to the way in which I observe you speak of the poor persecuted friar, and of the conduct of * * * *. I am not surprised to see M. N—— interesting himself in the matter. I am well acquainted with his zeal; but yours is to me wholly unexpected; it is that new language, which is usually the fruit of a *new* heart. Jesus Christ, in the Gospel, gives this as the mark by which those who have faith shall be known, that they shall speak with "other tongues;" and, in reality, a renovation of the thoughts and desires ever leads to that of the *speech*.

What you mention, also, of the days which you passed in solitude, and the satisfaction you found in reading, will give much pleasure to M. N——, when I have an opportunity of communicating it to him; and to my sister also. These are doubtless all novelties; but the whole process you are undergoing is one of renovation. This

* The reference here is doubtless to her brother the Duke de Roannez.

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novelty, which cannot be displeasing to God, as the old man cannot be pleasing to him, differs from the novelties of earth. The things of the world, however new they may be, continually grow old; but those of the Spirit, the longer they last, possess more and more of novelty. "Our old man perishes," says St. Paul, "yet the inward man is renewed day by day;" and it will be perfectly renewed only in eternity; where we shall sing without ceasing that new song of which David speaks,—that is, the melody which springs from a renewed and loving spirit.

Now, for news, I must tell you, in regard to those two persons, that I perceive plainly, their zeal suffers no abatement. This surprises me; for it is much more rare to see a steady continuance in a religious course, than the first entrances upon it. I bear them continually on my mind, and especially her "of the miracle;"* because her case is more than ordinarily wonderful, although that of the other is not a little so; nay, it is, so to speak, unexampled. It is certain that the holiness which God confers in this life, is the measure of the glory which he prepares in that which is to come. Thus, when looking forward to the crown and consummation of his work, through the vista of those rudimental graces which shine here in holy persons, I feel overwhelmed with veneration towards beings whom the Eternal appears to us to have chosen for his own. Shall I confess to you, I seem to behold them already seated on those thrones, from which, according to our Saviour's own promise,—Those who

* Marguerite Perier, who was at that time called "*La petite miraculeuse*," in allusion to the miraculous cure alleged to have been performed upon her, as recorded in most of the biographies of Pascal. (Transl.)

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have left all for him shall judge the world! But when, again, I reflect that those very persons may fall away, and be themselves among the unhappy number upon whom judgment is to be passed; and that such multitudes will lapse from glory, and yield to others the crown which God holds out to them;—I cannot endure such thoughts: and my distress in imagining them falling into this eternal misery, after having so justly looked for their attainment of felicity, leads me more urgently to God, in prayer, that he would not abandon his feeble creatures; and to entreat on behalf of those two, with whom you are acquainted, what the Church this day repeats from St. Paul, "O Lord, do thou complete that work which thou thyself hast commenced!" St. Paul frequently regarded himself under these two aspects: and this made him say, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest when I have preached to others, I myself be a cast-away."—"Happy is the man that feareth always!"

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## LETTER III.

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Assuredly, separation from an object never takes place without pain. We do not feel the tie which holds us, when we voluntarily follow an attractive object, as says St. Augustin; but when resistance begins, and an opposite course is to be pursued, then begins suffering: the



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bond stretches and suffers violence. This bond is our body, and it is one which does not wholly break till the hour of death. Our Lord says, "Since John the Baptist," that is, since his coming to the faithful, "the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by storm."* Before we become impressed with heavenly things, we feel nothing but the burden of sense, which presses us to the earth. When God draws us towards himself, the two opposing forces cause that conflict which himself only can overcome. "But we can do all things," says St. Léon, "with him; without whom we can do nothing." We must then submit to endure this conflict throughout the whole of our earthly existence; for here there never can be peace. "Christ came to bring a sword, and not peace."† Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that, as Scripture says, "the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God;"‡ so it may be said, that this warfare which appears so severe to men, is peace in the eyes of God; for it is the peace which Jesus Christ himself procured for us. Yet it will not be perfected till the body shall be destroyed; and this it is which makes us desirous of death, while we nevertheless manfully endure life, through love to Him who for our sakes endured both life and death, and who can give us benefits greater than "we can ask or think," as St. Paul says, in the Epistle of to-day.§

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* Matthew xi. 12.
† Matt. x. 34.
‡ 1 Cor. iii. 19.
§ Eph. iii. 20.

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## LETTER IV.

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God be praised, I have no more fears on your behalf, but am full of hope! Those are interesting words of Christ, "To them that have shall more be given." * By this promise, those who have received much are justified in expecting yet larger supplies of good. I endeavour, as much as possible, to let nothing distress me, and to receive all that befalls me as *for the best.*† I believe this to be a duty, and that it is sinful to do otherwise. For, in reality, what constitutes sin, is an opposition to the will of God; and thus, as the essence of sin consists in having a will of our own opposed to what we know to be that of God, it appears to me plain, that when we discern his will by providential events, it would be sinful not to conform ourselves to it. I have attained to the knowledge that in *all events* there is matter for admiration; since the will of God is to be traced in all. And I never cease to praise him for the evident, the unceasing, and the undiminished manifestations of his favour.

The affair of . . . . is not going on well: it inspires apprehension in those whose hearts are affected by divine grace, in the contemplation of the persecutions in prepara-

* Mark iv. 24, 25.

† M. De Sacy, writing to Madame Perier on the death of her eldest son, reminds her of these words of Pascal:—"I doubt not, Madam," he says, "that you remember that admirable expression of your brother, and one which I never met with in any one else. 'We must endeavour,' he says, 'to console ourselves under the greatest trials, and to receive all that befalls us as for the best,' &c. These expressions are the more memorable, inasmuch as he himself so fully practised them; and thus they proceeded in his case more from the heart than even from the understanding."



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tion—not only against individuals, (for that would be unimportant,) but against truth itself. Indeed, the cause of God seems well-nigh abandoned! It appears to me, that any service which can at this time be rendered to it must be especially valuable. God himself permits us to judge of divine things by natural ones; and thus it may be allowable to suppose that, as an earthly prince, driven by rebellion from his dominions, feels peculiar regard for such of his subjects as adhere to him amidst a universal revolt, so the Lord regards with especial favour those who, in such times as these, defend the purity of religion and morality, so universally assailed. But there is this difference between earthly sovereigns and the King of kings; that princes can only find their subjects faithful, but are unable to render them such; while God finds all his creatures faithless, and it is by his grace only that they become faithful. And thus, instead of the obligation which worldly princes feel towards those who adhere to their allegiance, those who maintain their duty to the Lord of all, are to him under an infinite obligation. Let us then ever praise him for this grace, (if he has bestowed it upon us,) for which we shall adore him throughout eternity; and let us entreat him to give us yet more and more of it; and ever to look with pity upon us, and upon our whole church, which can alone secure us a blessing.

I feel much for the persecuted one * of whom you speak. I plainly perceive that God has still his hidden servants, as he said to Elijah.† May we be of the number, and that in spirit, in sincerity, and truth!

Whatever may come of the affair of . . . . enough

* The Troyes MS. has "the *four* persecuted ones." † 1 Kings xix. 18.

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has, God be praised! been already done, to enable us to derive profitable lessons from those accursed principles. It remains for those who have taken any part in the affair to put up urgent prayers to God,—and let their relatives and friends pray also for them,—that they may not be allowed to prove unworthy of that great distinction which divine goodness has thus conferred upon them. All worldly honours are but a shadow of this; this alone is solid and real; and yet it is of no value unless the heart be rightly affected. *It is not bodily austerities, nor mental exercises,* but the gracious dispositions of the heart, which are acceptable to God, and are capable of sustaining the sufferings of the body and the mind.* For, in reality, two things are needed for our sanctification,—sufferings, and joys. St. Paul says, "it is through much tribulation that we must enter into the kingdom of God." † This ought to be the consolation of all who experience such trials; for, being warned beforehand that the path to heaven is filled with them, they should rejoice to find in themselves proofs that they are in the right way. But those very pains are not without their pleasures,—pleasures in their actual endurance, and in their results. For, as those who fall away from religion to return to the world, show that they find more enjoyment in earthly satisfactions, than in those which flow from a union with God; that the allurement of these things overpowers them; and, leading them to repent of their first choice, makes them "*penitents* of Satan," as they

* The beautiful sentiment here expressed will, doubtless, not pass unmarked, affording as it does a proof, among many others, of the slight hold which the more perverted doctrines of Romanism maintained upon the mind of Pascal. (Transl.)

† Acts xiv. 22.

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are called by Tertullian;—so none would ever quit the pleasures of the world to embrace the cross of Christ, if they did not find more real joy in contempt, in poverty, in privations, and in persecution from men, than in the delights of sin. "Thus, again," says Tertullian, "we are not to suppose that the Christian's life is one of sadness." We forsake one description of pleasures for others and greater. "Pray without ceasing," says St. Paul; "in every thing give thanks; rejoice evermore." * It is the joy of having found God, that is the source of our sorrow for having offended him, and of our change of life and conduct. He that finds a treasure in a field, according to our Saviour's instructions, has such joy, that he goes and sells all he possesses, and purchases the field.† Worldly persons know nothing of this joy, which "the world can neither give—nor take away." The blessed have this joy without any mixture of sorrow: persons of the world have their sorrows without this joy; and Christians have the joy mingled with sorrow, in the retrospect of their past indulgence in forbidden pleasures, and in the fear of losing their recovered peace of mind, by the seductions of those same pleasures which are ever at hand and importuning us. Thus we should constantly aim to cherish this joy which may moderate our fears, and this fear which shall preserve our joy; that the one may ever be a salutary check and counter-balance to the other. "In the day of prosperity be joyful; but in the day of adversity consider," ‡ says the Word of God; and so it shall be, till the promise of Jesus shall be accom-

* 1 Thess. v. 16—18. † Matthew xiii. 44. ‡ Eccles. vii. 14.

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plished in us, that "our joy shall be full."* Let us then not be cast down by afflictions, nor believe that religion possesses nothing but sorrows without consolation. True piety—the perfection of which, however, shall only be found in heaven—abounds with satisfactions, both in its commencement, its progress, and its consummation. Its lustre is diffused over everything within its influence; and if any shades obscure it, especially at the outset, they arise from ourselves, not from religion; not from the implantation of the new principle, but the prevalence of the old.† Subdue sin, and happiness will be complete. Let us not then ascribe our troubles to our piety, but to ourselves, and look for relief only to our progressive improvement.

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## LETTER V.

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I am pleased at the hope you hold out of the success of that affair, from which you are fearful of some self-complacency ensuing. There is cause for fear in every case; for, were it successful,‡ I should be fearful of its being followed by that evil sorrow which St. Paul describes as leading to death, instead of that salutary one which leads to life.

It is certain that the matter was one of difficulty; and

* John xvi. 24.

† This remark occurs almost verbatim in the "Thoughts," in the passage beginning thus:—"It is true there is suffering in the commencement of a life of religion."

‡ The original is followed here; but the sentiment and context seem to require that it should stand "unsuccessful." (Transl.)

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if the person in question should be extricated from it, there will be cause for some self-satisfaction, if it be not regarded as the result of the prayers offered up on his behalf, and therefore a special interposition from God. But should it be unsuccessful, there ought to be no despondency; for the same reason that, Divine aid having been sought, it is evident that the Lord has taken the result into his own hands: he is to be regarded as the author of all good, and of all evil;—of everything, in short, but sin. I would repeat to that person, on the subject in question, those words of Scripture to which I have before referred:—"In the day of prosperity rejoice, but in the day of adversity consider."

And now I must further say to *another* person, with whom you are acquainted, who says she has so many things on her mind that give her uneasiness, that I am much concerned to hear this of her. I feel deeply her disquiets, and would willingly relieve them. I beg she will not anticipate evils that may exist only in her apprehension, but remember our Lord's caution,—"sufficient unto each day is the evil thereof."*

The past ought not to disturb us, for therein it is only our faults that we need regret; and still less the future, since that is utterly out of our own control, and may, perhaps, never be ours at all. The present is all that is really our own; and *this*, it is our duty to improve to God's service. It is here that our thoughts should centre. Yet the restless world thinks scarcely anything of the passing moment and the present scenes, but only of those which are on-coming: thus we are always living in

* Matthew vi. 34.

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the future, and never in the present. Our Lord directs us not to carry our anxieties further than from day to day; this is the limit that ought to be maintained, both for our safety and our tranquillity. For, in reality, the precepts of Christianity abound with real comfort—far more, I hesitate not to say, than the maxims of the world.

I also foresee, in coming times, many sufferings which await *that* person,* as well as others, and myself likewise. But I always make it my prayer to God, when tempted to indulge in these solicitous forebodings, to preserve me in his own prescribed course. Then I call myself to an account; and I see that I am neglecting present duty in yielding to anxieties respecting the future, which it is not only useless, but a duty not to dwell upon. It is for want of duly knowing and considering the present, that our thoughts are so restless in the contemplation of the future. What, however, I am now saying, I say for myself rather than for *that* person, who I well know possesses more virtue and judgment than I can pretend to; but I wish to show him where my own defect lies, in order to warn him against the same. We sometimes more effectually correct ourselves by the view of the evil qualities of others, than of their good ones; and, in fact, it is the most useful habit we can cultivate, to procure advantage to ourselves out of evil,—since that is so universal, while excellence is so rare.

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* It can be little doubted, that here and in other instances, in his letters to Mademoiselle de Roannez, it was her brother, the Duke, that he referred to,—his own attached friend; and, together with his youthful sister, the objects of Pascal's personal and religious solicitudes. (Transl.)



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## LETTER VI.

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I much blame some one whom you know * for the disquietudes in which I find she is indulging, and which occasion me much surprise. This is to be regarded as a kind of minor or emblematical judgment, which has the effect of exciting a general, internal disquietude; in the same way as the universal judgment will cause a general terror throughout the universe, except in those who have already judged themselves —as *she* (whom I refer to) professes to have done. This temporal suffering will exempt from that which shall be eternal, through the infinite merits of Christ, who has endured the same, and made it his own. Let this be *her* consolation. Our burden has been also *his;* without this it would be insupportable.

"Take," he says, "my yoke upon you." It is then no longer our yoke, it is his; it is he therefore who bears it. "My yoke is easy and light." It is light, however, only to him, and is rendered so by means of his divine power. I would say then to *her*, she should remember that these disquietudes do not arise from the good work that has been begun in her, but from the evil that yet remains in her heart;† and that they ought to be continually decreasing. She should be like the child torn by rude violence from

* "*La personne,*" therefore *herself.* This fanciful mode of allusion to his correspondent and others, seems to have been a habit with Pascal: vide *ante.* (Transl.)

† This remark occurs, with some variations in the preceding and other letters.

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its mother's arms, who struggles to retain it: we should not charge the tender parent with the disturbance which her fond resistance occasions; but only the cruel ravishers of her babe, in their ruthless efforts to tear it from her. The offices for the season of Advent are peculiarly fitted to give encouragement to the weak: we have in them repeated exhortations of Scripture addressed to the faint and unbelieving; and in the evening services of to-day, it is said, "Take courage, and fear not; for your God shall come to save and deliver you."

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## LETTER VII.

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Your letter has given me the greatest joy. I confess I was beginning to fear, or, at least, to be perplexed. I do not know what that trouble was, the commencement of which you speak of; but I know, whatever it was, that such things must befall us. I was reading the 13th chapter of St. Mark, just before I thought of writing to you; and I will tell you, therefore, what occurred to me upon it. Jesus Christ is there addressing a solemn discourse to his disciples on the subject of his second coming; and, as whatever happens to the church, happens to each individual member also, it is certain that the whole chapter predicts equally the state of every one in whom, on conversion, the old man

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is destroyed; and the destruction of the entire universe also, to be replaced by "new heavens, and a new earth." And thus I should think, that the prediction of the overthrow of the ancient temple, which prefigures that of the old man in each of us, and wherein it is said, that "not one stone shall be left upon another," indicates that none of the former passions of the corrupt nature shall remain; these fierce contentions, both civil and domestic, represent also, with striking fidelity, the internal conflicts experienced by all who give themselves up to God.

But how impressive are these words: "When ye shall see the abomination of desolation in the holy place, let not him that is on the house-top go into the house." It seems to me, that this perfectly describes the times in which we are now living, in which moral corruption has found its way into holy places and theological writings. We must seek to escape from these calamities: "Woe to those with child, and give suck in those days;" that is, those who have absorbing ties to the world! How applicable to this subject are the words of a pious female: "We are not to consider whether we are called to quit the world, but solely, whether we are called to remain in it; in the same way as we should not deliberate whether we are urged to fly a house, infected with plague or on fire."

This chapter of the Evangelist, which I should like to have the opportunity of reading through with you, concludes with an exhortation to watch and pray continually; and, in truth, what can be more suitable than this, when our dangers are unceasing?

For this purpose I send herewith the prayers which you wished for. After you left us, there was a miracle

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performed upon a Nun of Pontoise, who, without leaving her Convent, was cured of a distressing complaint in the head, by an act of devotion to the holy thorn. I will tell you more about it another time; but I must quote to you, on this subject, a saying of St. Augustin, very consolatory to a certain description of persons,—namely, that those only really see miracles, whom the miracles benefit; for they are not seen at all if they do not benefit.

God never abandons his own, even in the grave; then their bodies, though dead to the eyes of men, are even more alive than before with the Lord, because sin is extinguished in them; while, on the other hand, during life, it ever exists in us, at least in its roots,—for sometimes the fruits of sin are not visible; and this root of evil, inseparable from men during their earthly existence, deprives them of the honour we should otherwise yield them; indeed, it rather exposes them to our disesteem. Then death becomes necessary, for the entire destruction of this fatal root of corruption; and the Christian is led to desire it for that purpose.

But why need I repeat these things to you who know them so well? They would be more suitably addressed to those *other* persons whom you mention; but they would not listen to them!

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(*Note of Père Guerrier.*) "I have transcribed the above from a manuscript which I found among those given by Mademoiselle Perier to the P. P. of the Oratory of Clermont."

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## TO THE MARQUISE DE SABLÉ.*

*December*, 1660.

ALTHOUGH I am much oppressed with business, I cannot defer offering you my warm acknowledgments for having procured me the acquaintance of M. Menjot; for I have no doubt, Madam, that it is to you I am indebted for it. And having formed a high opinion of him, from much that I had before heard from my sister, I cannot express the pleasure your kindness has afforded me. It is only necessary to read his letter, to perceive the extent of his ability and judgment; and though I have not been able to enter deeply into the matters of which he treats in his works,† I cannot omit saying how much I have been edified by the way in which he briefly reconciles the immateriality of the soul with the power of matter, to alter its functions, and to affect its sanity.‡ I am impatient for an opportunity of personal communication.

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* MSS. of *Bibliot. Roy.* 2d Portfolio of Dr. Vallant, p. 288. According to the common practice of those times, this letter ends without complimentary expressions or signature. It is evidently dictated, but not written, by Pascal; but its authenticity is undoubted, being attested by a note of Vallant, and by a letter from Menjot to Madame de Sablé.

† Menjot, who was a very popular physician among the Protestants, was a member of the reformed religion. He was intimate with Madame de Sablé, in whose company he had a theological discussion one day with Madame Perier and Madame de Sablé herself; the result of which, indirectly, was the publication of the celebrated work of Arnauld "On the Perpetuity of Faith."

‡ This must have been the work entitled "*Febrium Malignarum Historia et Curatio;*" the first edition of which appeared about the end of 1660. There is in it, in fact, a Dissertation on Delirium,—"*De Delirio in genere.*"

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## FRAGMENT OF A LETTER TO M. PERIER.*

1661.

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You have interested me much by the account you give me of your controversies; and, chiefly, because you yourself take an interest in them. I am willing to suppose you do not imitate the controversialists of this part of the country, who appear but little to improve the privilege which God confers upon them of suffering for the maintenance of his truth. For if the dispute had been only for the purpose of establishing dogmas of their own, they could not have pursued any very different line of conduct; and they seem not to know, that the same Providence which has enlightened the mind of one, has withheld that advantage from another; and appear, while labouring to enforce conviction of their own views, as if they served a different God from the one who thus permits these difficulties which impede their progress.

This is the effect of overweening self-confidence. When we seek to insure the success of an object by our own efforts only, we become irritated by opposition; we

* Second MS. Collection of P. Guerrier, p. 210.—This fragment has been already in part published, but with some alterations, by Bossut. It is also to be found in the MS. *Suppl. Franc.* 1685. These MSS. do not, however, give the date of the letter, nor to whom addressed. It may be supposed to have been written at the period when Pascal was communicating with Arnauld and Nicole, respecting their signing the formulary, —that is, in 1661. This letter is actually addressed to M. Perier, and MM. Montorcier, President of the Court of Aides, Guerrier, Avocat Domat, and the other persons, who in 1661 maintained a sharp controversy with the Jesuits. These names, and some others, are cited in a "Narrative of the condition of Jansenism in the Town of Clermont," in 1661, which is extant in the MS. of Guerrier.

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overlook the nature of the obstacles, and find them adverse to our will, and wounding to our self-love.

But when it is really God who inspires our proceedings, we encounter nothing externally that does not spring from the same principle which influences ourselves; there is no opposition between it and our own motives. He who is the author of *our* conduct, is the author of that of our opponents, or, at least, permits the resistance they offer to us; so that, as there is in this respect no difference between us; and, as it is not our own will that brings us into conflict with external events, but that of another, and the same will, which produces the good and permits the evil; this conformity leaves the mind in a state of peace, and is one of the best proofs that we are acting under the guidance of God's Spirit. It is far more certain that God permits this evil, great as it may be, than that he (and not any other secret mover) does not produce the good in ourselves, however great that may be; and thus, in order clearly to ascertain whether God is working in us, it is far better to test ourselves by our deportment towards others, than by our internal motives. If we look only within, even when we find nothing but what is good, we cannot be certain that such good actually proceeds from God. But when we look without, that is, for instance, when we find we suffer external obstacles with patience,—this proves that there is a uniformity of design in the inspirer of our actions, and of those who resist them: and, as it cannot be doubted that it is God who permits the one, we are justified in a humble hope that it is he who produces the other also.

But see what is our conduct! We act as if our mis-

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sion was to ensure triumphs to the truth, instead of its being one only to contend for it. The love of victory is so strong, that when it masks itself under the pretence of a desire to establish truth, we often mistake the one for the other, and think we are aiming at the glory of God, when, in fact, we are only seeking our own. It appears to me, that the way in which we endure opposition is the surest test of our motives; for if, after all, our aim is conformity to God's will, we shall desire the triumph of his justice as much as of his mercy; and when he does not choose to avail himself of our feeble services, we should equally acquiesce, whether truth be established or opposed; seeing that, in the one case, it is the mercy of God that is triumphant, and in the other, his justice.

*Pater juste, mundus te non cognovit:* "Righteous Father, the world hath not known thee." * Thereon St. Augustin remarks, that it is through his righteousness that the world hath not known him. Let us, with St. Paul, pray, labour, and rejoice evermore!

Had you checked my former freedoms, I should perhaps not have thus repeated them, and observed a better measure of discretion. But I shall not suppress this, any more than my former remarks: you can do so if you think proper. I could not withhold the expression of my displeasure against those who are so determined that truth shall be received on *their* demonstration,—a thing which Christ himself did not think fit to do, when in the flesh. It is a delusion, and it seems to me to treat . . . . . †

* John xvii. 25. † The rest of the passage is wanting in the MS.

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I am much concerned at M. Laporte's * illness. Believe me, I respect him with all my heart. I am, &c.

(*Note of P. Guerrier.*) "I have copied this letter from the original in M. Pascal's hand-writing. The last sheet is wanting. There are two or three words which I could not decipher, and the whole is very difficult to read."

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## TO HIS BROTHER-IN-LAW, M. PERIER, ON THE DEATH OF M. PASCAL, HIS FATHER.†

*Paris, 17th October,* 1651.

As you are both ‡ now informed of our common loss, and as my former unfinished letter afforded me much consolation, by the opportunity it gave me to relate some of the alleviating circumstances which attended our afflictive bereavement, I cannot forbear imparting to you the considerations which further occur to my mind in connexion with this event; praying that God would ever preserve them in my recollection, and make them, by his grace, conduce to our benefit and comfort, and that of all our friends.

I do not remember where my first letter broke off, for my sister sent it away without noticing that it was incomplete. I think, however, the purport of it was to give

* M. Laporte was a physician at Clermont, and a friend of the Perier family. Madame Perier speaks with great regard of him in her unpublished letters.

† First Collection MS. of P. Guerrier, p. 1.

‡ M. and Madame Perier. Stephen Pascal, the father, had died on the 24th of September preceding.

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an account of some of the events in the life, and of the circumstances attending the final sickness of our deceased parent; and these I would willingly now repeat,—for they are, to my inexpressible comfort, indelibly engraven on my memory and heart,—but that they were sufficiently described in my former letter; and my sister further proposes to take the earliest convenient opportunity of relating them still more circumstantially to you.

I propose, therefore, on this occasion, only to communicate the reflections which I have drawn from these circumstances; and which, independent of the interest that from natural ties we feel in the event itself, must, I think, tend to the comfort and edification of every Christian mind.

There is one broad foundation on which I would place the remarks I am about to make; and it is one which is capable of affording the fullest comfort to all who, in the depths of grief, are able to raise their minds to such considerations: it is this, that in all our afflictions we should seek consolation, neither in ourselves, nor in man, nor in any created object,—but in God alone. And the reason of this is that, creatures being not the originating cause of those events which we call evils, but the providence of God only,—the Arbiter and Disposer of all things,—we can hope for solid comfort under troubles alone by tracing them up to him as their great source and origin. Now if, acting upon this principle, we regard the event that has befallen us, not as the result of mere chance; not as an inevitable fatality of nature; not as some fortuitous play of the elements and component parts of man; (for assuredly God has not abandoned his elect to accident

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and blind chance!) but as a result—necessary, inevitable, just, holy; conducive to the welfare of the church, and to the glory and greatness of God;—a result of his providential decree, pronounced from eternal ages, and designed to be executed in the fulness of time, in a certain year, a certain day, hour, place, and way; in fact, that all that has occurred had been precisely foreknown and fore-ordained of God: if, I say, under his gracious influences, we regard the occurrence—not in itself, and apart from the divine arrangement; but apart from itself, and as an act of the will of the Most High; a decree emanating from his perfect righteousness—a part of his providential dispensations; (all which constitute its true cause; without which it could not have occurred; and by which alone—and in this particular manner—it has taken place;)—contemplating in this manner the events in question, we should adore, in humble silence, the lofty impenetrability of his mysteries; we should reverence the holiness of his determinations; we should bless the graciousness of his providence; and, wholly resigning our will to the will of God, we should desire only to have fulfilled in us, and for us, what he has designed to be accomplished in us, and for us, from the remotest ages of eternity!

Let us, then, ever take this view of his dealings with us; and carry out, in this manner, the lesson which I received from a very eminent person in the period of our heavy affliction;—namely, that real comfort is only to be found in Christian truth! Be assured, that neither Socrates nor Seneca can furnish us with any remedies for such events as these. They labour under the error

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that has misled unenlightened men from the earliest times; they have supposed death to be the mere natural lot of man: and their discourses, founded on this false principle, are so futile and useless, that they serve only to show the intrinsic weakness of human nature, in the baseness and puerility of the highest efforts of genius.

It is otherwise with Jesus Christ, it is otherwise with the Scriptures of his inspiration. Perfect truth is there revealed; and a consolation accompanies it, which can never fail, inasmuch as it is infallibly freed from any mixture of error.

Be it our part, then, to regard death under that aspect of truth which the Holy Spirit has revealed. It is our inestimable advantage to know, that it is, in fact and reality, the penalty of sin; imposed upon man for the expiation of sin; necessary to man for purging away his guilt: that it is the only method appointed for purifying the soul from that sensuality, from which the holiest are not exempt in this evil world. We know that life—the life of the Christian—is a continual sacrifice, rendered complete only by death; we know that Jesus, on coming into the world, regarded and offered himself to God, as an offering and a victim for the sacrifice; that his birth, his earthly existence, his death, his resurrection, his ascension, and presence in the Eucharist; his eternal session at the right hand of the Most High; are all one and the same great sacrifice: and therefore we know, that what has been accomplished in Christ, must be accomplished also in all his members.

Let us then ever consider life as a sacrifice; and let the events of life only be regarded of importance by the

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Christian, in so far as they tend either to the interruption or the fulfilment of this sacrifice. We should hold nothing to be an evil, but that which renders God's oblation the victim of Satan; but we should hold that to be a good, which turns the victim of Satan into an oblation for God; and it is by this rule that we ought to estimate the real nature of death.

For these purposes, we should duly weigh what is the nature of the person of Jesus Christ; for as everything in man is evil, and as God looks upon man only through Christ as his Mediator, so ought men also only to look upon themselves, or upon each other, through the same holy medium. For, apart from this, we find in ourselves nothing but misery and sin; but, regarding ourselves in Jesus, we discover abounding edification, and unfailing peace and joy.

Let us, then, never reflect upon death without connecting it with Christ. Apart from him, it is all terror and dread—the object of our detestation—the horror of nature! Viewed in Jesus, it is the entire reverse of all this: it is gracious, holy,—the comfort and joy of the saints. Every thing in the Saviour is fair, even death itself; he submitted himself to death and suffering, that he might sanctify and bless them; and, uniting in himself the person of God and of man, he became all that was great and all that was abject, in order that, in himself, he might sanctify all things, except sin, and be a model and example to his followers in every varying condition of existence.

To consider the nature of death, and of death in Jesus Christ, we should see what place it holds in his perpetual

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and uninterrupted sacrifice; and, with this view, we may remark, that, in all sacrifices, the principal part is the death of the victim. The oblation and consecration which precede are important circumstantials, but the accomplishment of the sacrifice is in the death; in which, by the extinction of its life, the creature offers to God all the tribute in its power, by annihilating itself before the face of his supreme Majesty, and doing homage to his absolute sovereignty, and eternal existence. It is true, there is another thing after the death of the hostage, without which it would be useless; that is, God's acceptance of the sacrifice. This is what we find in Scripture, *Et odoratus est Dominus suavitatem;* — "And the Lord smelled a sweet savour."* This is, indeed, the consummation of the sacrifice; but it is rather an act of God towards the creature, than of the creature towards God, and does not disprove the position that death is the final act performed by that creature.

All these things are accomplished in Christ. Coming into the world, he offers himself; *Obtulit semetipsum per Spiritum sanctum;*†—"Through the eternal Spirit he offered himself." *Ingrediens mundum dixit; Hostiam noluisti.*‡ *Tunc dixi, Ecce, venio. In capite, &c.*§ "When he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not. Then said I, Lo, I come." This is his oblation. His sanctification followed immediately upon it. This sacrifice endured throughout his

* Gen. viii. 21. † Heb. ix. 14.

‡ Heb. x. 5, 7. It will be remarked, by a degree of inaccuracy in the citations, that Pascal generally quoted Scripture from memory.

§ Psalm xl. 7.

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life, and was completed in his death. "Ought he not to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" * "Though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things that he suffered." † But "in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong cries and tears unto him that was able to save, he was heard in that he feared;" ‡ and God raised him from the dead, and exalted him to his glory, which was prefigured before by the fire that fell from heaven upon the offerings, to burn and consume the body, and to make it the spiritual food of life and glory. This is what Jesus has achieved and accomplished by his resurrection.

The sacrifice, therefore, being perfected by the death of Christ, and consummated also in his body by his resurrection, in which the type of sinful flesh is absorbed in glory, he has done all his part; it remained only that the oblation should be accepted of God: that, as the smoke ascended, and carried a sweet savour to his throne, so also Jesus should, in that state of perfect immolation, be offered, carried up, and accepted at the throne of God himself. This is what has been accomplished in his ascension, wherein, by his own power, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, which surrounded him on all sides, he has been carried up, as the smoke of the earthly sacrifices—types of the Redeemer—were carried up by the force of the surrounding air, the type also of the Spirit. In the Acts of the Apostles we are expressly informed, that "he was received up into heaven;" whereby

* Luke xxiv. 26. † Heb. v. 8. ‡ Ib. v. 7.

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assurance is given that this sacred offering, accomplished on earth, has been accepted of God, and received into his august bosom, there to shine in inextinguishable glory through everlasting ages!

This is the state of these things, as regards our blessed Lord. Let us now see how it concerns ourselves. From the instant that we enter into the church, which is the world of the faithful, and especially of the elect,—and into which Jesus, by a privilege peculiar to him as "the only-begotten Son of God," entered instantaneously on his incarnation,—from that period we are offered up and consecrated. This sacrifice continues throughout our mortal life, and is consummated at the hour of death; when the soul, thoroughly purified from all the sensuality and sin which cleave to it through life, completes its immolation, and is received into the bosom of its God.

Let us not then mourn as the heathen, who have no hope. We lost not our father at his death: he was lost to us, so to say, when he entered the church at baptism. From that period he was the property of God; his life was devoted to God's service; his worldly conduct had reference only to God. In his death he became wholly emancipated from sin; he was thenceforth accepted by God; and his sacrifice was accomplished and perfected.

His vows are now performed; he has finished the work which was given him to do; he has achieved the sole object of his creation. The will of his God is fulfilled in him, and his will is absorbed in that of his God. Let us not desire to separate what the Lord has united: let us aim to suppress, or to moderate, by the influences of



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Divine truth, the delusive suggestions of a corrupt and fallen nature; which would ever seek to disturb the holy convictions inspired by the revealed truths of the Gospel.

Let us not look upon death like pagan moralists, but like Christians; that is, as St. Paul says, as those who "have hope,"—the especial privilege of the Christian. Let us not regard the body (like unenlightened nature) as mere worthless flesh, but (by the instruction of faith) as a pure and eternal temple of the Holy Spirit. We know, as we learn from the Fathers, that the bodies of the saints are taken possession of by the Spirit till the period of the resurrection, which is effected by the means of his innate virtue and indwelling. It is for this reason that we honour the relics of the saints; and it was on this principle that, formerly, the Eucharist was placed in the mouth of the dead; inasmuch as, knowing that they were temples of the Holy Spirit, it was believed that they were entitled to participate in this sacred mystery. The church has now, however, discontinued this custom; not as disregarding the sacredness of the body, but because, the Eucharist consisting of the food of the living, it is considered unfit to administer it to the dead.

On all these grounds, therefore, we ought not, as nature would suggest, to deem man to cease to exist at death; but, as truth assures us, only then to commence his existence. Let us no longer look upon the soul as perished and destroyed; but as still living, and united to the Everlasting Life: and let us, by meditation on these truths, learn to correct those erroneous views so deeply

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imprinted in our minds, and those feelings of dread which the thought of mortality is so wont to inspire.

To allay yet more effectually also this dread of death, we ought well to consider in what it originates; and, for this purpose, let me briefly show you how it is the source of all evil and sin. This I myself learned from two most eminent and holy persons. The great truth lying at the bottom of the mystery then is, that God has created man with a tendency to two descriptions of love,—the one to his Maker, the other to himself: but accompanied with this law, that his love to God should be infinite; that is, that it should know no limits, except in the Infinite himself; and that his love to himself should be limited, and subordinated to that of his God.

In this state, man could not only love himself without sin, but he would have committed sin in not loving himself.

When sin entered into the world, man lost the first of these affections; and love to himself alone remaining, in a spirit capable of infinite attachments, the self-love spread and extended throughout the void left by the love of God: and thus he came to love himself only, and all other things for the sake of himself;—in short, self-love then reached to infinitude.

This, then, was the origin of self-love. It was natural to Adam, and proper in his state of innocence; but it became criminal and immoderate, as a consequence of sin.

Here is the source both of the defectiveness and of the exorbitance of man's affections. It is the same with



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his lust of domination, his voluptuousness, and other evil dispositions. The application is easy: let us bring it to bear upon the subject before us. The dread of death was natural to man in his innocence, because, his existence being pleasing to God, it could not but be agreeable to himself; and death must equally be an object of apprehension, since it terminated a life conformed to the Divine will. Afterwards, when he sinned, his whole life became corrupt; his body and his mind fell into mutual conflict; and both became enemies to God. Notwithstanding, however, this radical change and corruption of his primitive innocence, man's love of life remained; and the dread of death, which was justifiable in Adam, has become unjustifiable and criminal in ourselves.

This, then, is the origin of man's horror of death, and the cause of all the defectiveness in his affections.

Let us now learn to remedy the error of nature by the power of faith. The dread of death, I repeat, is natural, —but only in a state of innocence: death is, indeed, formidable,—but it is when it puts an end to a sinless life.

It was reasonable to hold death in abhorrence, when it dissevered a pure spirit from a sinless body; but it should be loved, when it separates a pure spirit from a body of impurity. It was right to dread it, when it interrupted the harmonious union of the soul and the body; but not when, by its means, peace supervenes upon a state of irreconcilable discordance. In fine, when death was the cause of disquiet to a body that knew not sin; when it took from it the power of honouring its God; when it removed from the soul a

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body submissive to, and co-operating with its desires; when it destroyed all the earthly good which man was made capable of enjoying; — it might then justly be abhorred. But when it puts an end to a life of impurity; when it takes from the soul the power to offend; when it liberates the soul from a rebel, potent for evil, and counteracting every effort for its salvation;—then our views of death, and our sentiments towards it, ought to be wholly changed.

We are thus not called upon to relinquish such a love of life as nature inspired;—for we received that at the hand of God: but let us remember that it must be such a life as that which was originally given;—not one entirely opposed to it, and changed.

In justifying a love such as Adam felt, and such as Jesus Christ even was conscious of, for a life of innocence, we should equally aim to hold in aversion one of a wholly contrary nature. In like manner, we should fear only such a death as Christ shrunk from,—one that terminated an existence pleasing to God; not a death ordained to punish a guilty, and to purify a corrupted body; and which we ought rather to anticipate with welcome, did the cardinal laws of faith, of hope, and of love, exercise due influence over us.

It is one of the great principles of Christianity, that whatsoever befell our holy Redeemer, should form part of the experience, both in the body and in the soul, of every individual Christian;—that as Jesus suffered during his mortal existence, died as to his mortal life, rose again to a life immortal, ascended to heaven, and sat down at the right hand of the Father; so his followers should

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suffer, die, rise again, ascend, and take their place in the eternal presence.

All these things are accomplished in the soul; but not all in the body, during the present life.

The soul suffers and dies to sin, in repentance and baptism; the soul also, in baptism, revives to a new life: the soul takes leave of earth, and ascends to heaven in the hour of death; and, at the hour that God appoints, takes its place at his right hand.

None of these things befall the body during the present life; but they all take place afterwards.

At death, the body dies, as to its mortal life; at the judgment it will rise to a new life; after the judgment, it will ascend to heaven, and sit down at the right hand of God.

Thus the same things befall both the body and the soul, but in a different order of time; and the changes in the body occur only when those in the soul have been accomplished,—that is, at the hour of death. So that death is the consummation of blessedness to the soul, but the commencement only of blessedness to the body.

This is the admirable process devised by divine wisdom for the salvation of the righteous; and St. Augustin teaches us in reference to this subject, that God has ordained it in this manner, lest, if man's body were to die and be raised again for ever, at the period of baptism, evangelical obedience would only be entered upon through the love of life; whereas faith shines far more transcendently, when it aspires to immortality through the gloom and shadows of death.

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These, then, are our convictions upon this subject; this is the substance of our professed faith: and I believe you will find, in what I have thus imperfectly put before you, considerations that will be abundantly sufficient for your support and consolation. I should not venture to advance these views on my own authority only; but as they are the matured result of the instructions I have myself received, I feel confidence in communicating them to you, praying that the mere rudimental hints I am now furnishing, may, through the Divine blessing, bring forth in you much fruit. Without him we can do nothing; and, as he himself has taught us, our best instructions, not derived from his wisdom, are ineffectual.

Do not suppose that I would wish you not to feel this event: it is, indeed, a most afflictive one, and would be insupportable without Divine aid. We are not to desire an exemption from sorrow, like the angelic world, whose feelings have nothing in common with those of nature; neither, however, should we resemble the unhappy pagan, who is a stranger to the blessing of grace. Our aim should be, while we grieve, to realize the privileges of Christians; and to have the sentiments of nature chastened and subdued by the consolations of religion. We should endeavour to be able to say with the Apostles, "We are afflicted, but not cast down;" grace should not only exist in us, but so obtain the mastery over us, that, in glorifying our heavenly Father, his will may become our own; that grace should supervene and subdue the emotions of nature; that our afflictions should be regarded by us as a sacrifice, offered and consecrated to the divine

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glory; and that thus, these individual oblations should serve to prepare for, and usher in, that great sacrifice, wherein universal nature shall be offered up to the dominion of Jesus Christ!

In this manner, then, we shall—as should ever be the aim of true Christians—derive advantage from our infirmities and sorrows, when made to swell this mighty holocaust; for everything—even the most opposed in their nature—shall contribute to the good of the elect. And if we are careful to mark these things, and to regard them in their true light, we shall assuredly find them tend greatly to our edification.

If it is true, as has been already observed, that the death of the body is only a figure of that of the soul, and that on this principle we found the surest hope of the safety of the latter, let us, although unable wholly to repress our grief, take this comfort to ourselves,—that, dreadful as may be the thought of death to our mortal nature, the death of the soul should inspire infinitely more terror and affliction. The first, the righteousness of God dispenses to us; his mercy averts from us the last. We should, then, ever remember our inestimable blessings in the midst of afflictions; and we shall not fail to find comfort spring up in our minds, commensurate with the heaviness of our sorrow.

Nothing can deprive us of this, unless it be an apprehension of an exposure still to those sufferings, which are designed to purge away the remaining defilements of the mortal life; and it should ever be our sacred duty, earnestly to seek to avert these instances of the Divine displeasure at sin. Against these, prayer and intercession

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are powerful remedies. But I have learned from a pious instructor, that in an affliction such as ours, one of the truest and most edifying marks of affection that we can show towards the departed, is to *do* all that they would have wished, had they been still with us; to follow in all things their holy precepts; and, for their sakes, to become all that, in their present glorified state, they would desire us to be.

By these observances, we cause them, in a manner, to revive among us after their decease; inasmuch as their counsels are still living and influential with us. And, as the leaders of heresy are in another life punished for the sins into which they have impelled their followers, among whom their poisonous doctrines still survive, so the holy dead are recompensed, not only for their own obedience, but in the person also of those, whom they have led into the right way by their counsels and their example.

Let us then, to the utmost of our power, cause the departed object of our love thus, as in the presence of God, to survive among us; and let us further draw comfort from the *union of our hearts* in the bonds of mutual affection. For herein also we seem in a measure to enjoy his presence among us again; in the same way as Jesus is ever present in the assemblies of the faithful.

I pray our heavenly Father to enable us always to maintain these sentiments towards each other; and that he may fill me with continually increasing tenderness and affection towards you and my sister. In this way will the love we bore towards our common parent be ever perpetuated among us; and that which he felt for us will



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serve as a legacy to us his children, to cement and strengthen our affection towards each other.

May you be more and more fortified in these holy principles which I have thus endeavoured to lay down. They would, doubtless, have occurred to you without my suggestion; yet I could not help bringing them under your consideration; for having found the value of such reflections myself, it was impossible for me not to desire that you should also experience the consolation they have afforded me.

It is I, in fact, to whom the loss of such a parent is the most irreparable! Had it occurred six years ago, I should myself have been lost; and, although at the present time my need of his paternal cares may not be so urgent, I well know that for many years to come,—nay throughout my life, however prolonged,—they would have been important and desirable!

Yet is it our privilege to hope, that, the providence of God having ordered all the circumstances of his departure, —that it should occur at such time and place, and in such manner,—doubtless they have all been such as were most for his glory and our welfare.

Difficult as it is to realize it, I have a firm belief that this is the case with all the dealings of God with us; and that, adverse as they may now appear, he is able to turn them all to our benefit and satisfaction, if we are willing to commit the conduct of them to his hands.

There are not wanting memorable instances in which, where the death of near relatives has been anticipated with fear, God has granted the prayers for their preservation; yet has the prolonged life been the cause of so much

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unhappiness, that there has been seen cause to wish such interposition had not been bestowed.*

Man is too weak and short-sighted to form a sound judgment of events and their consequences.

Let us then cast all our care upon God, nor distress ourselves by rash and unwise attempts to look into futurity.

Let us commit to him the whole disposal of our earthly lot, and cultivate a cheerful acquiescence in all his dealings with us.

St. Augustin tells us, that there is in every man a serpent, an Eve, and an Adam. The serpent is our sensual nature; the Eve is our lustful appetites; and the Adam is reason. Nature is ever exposing us to temptation; lust fills us with desires; but sin is not completed unless reason consents.

Let then, if so it must be, the serpent and the woman still harass with their temptations! But let us ever pray that God may so strengthen the Adam within us, that he may gain the victory; and that Christ may, in his turn, be victorious over him, and reign in us for ever. Amen!

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* This, I apprehend, must be regarded as a questionable sentiment: it can only be admitted, on the supposition that the prayer has been urged in an impatient and unsubmissive spirit. If otherwise, whatever be the result, the prayer was justifiable, and man has nothing to do with consequences. (Transl.)

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## LETTER TO MADAME PERIER.*

*Rouen, Saturday, 31st Jan.*, 1643.

My dear Sister,

I doubt not you have been disappointed at being so long without any intelligence from these parts; but you most probably have supposed that it had been caused by the journey of the *Elus*, which, in fact, was the case: but for that, I should not have failed to write more frequently. I have now to tell you, that the Commissioners being at Gizors, my father wished me to go to Paris; where I found a letter from you, expressing your surprise at my complaining of you for not writing oftener; and saying, that you had written to Rouen once every week. When I returned to Rouen I found a letter from M. Perier, saying you were unwell. He does not state whether your illness is serious, or whether you are better again; and hearing nothing more from him after a considerable interval, we are very anxious for a further account; and beg you will write as soon as possible. Yet I hope it may be needless; and that before you receive this, we shall have had letters either from you or M. Perier. The affair of the department is, God be praised! coming to a conclusion. If I had any news I would send it you.

I am, my dear Sister

* Superscribed "*A Mademoiselle Perier la Conseillère, à Clermont.*" This letter, though containing only family details, we have inserted among the others, notwithstanding its date. We have taken it from the autograph which has been obligingly furnished to us by an able bibliographer, M. A. A. Renouard. He had received it originally through the Abbé Bossut.

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(Here follows a postscript in the hand-writing of Stephen Pascal, the father):—

My dear daughter must excuse me for not having written to her as she wished; but I have really had no leisure. I have never been a tenth part so pressed for time as at this moment. I have not been in bed six times, during the last four months, before two o'clock in the morning.

I lately began a letter rallying you on the subject of your last respecting M. Desjeux's marriage; but I have never found time to finish it. As for news, the daughter of M. de Paris, Master of the Accounts, married to M. Neufville, is dead, as well as M. Belair's daughter, married to young Lambert. Your little boy slept here last night, and is, thank God! very well.

Believe me ever your true and affectionate friend,

PASCAL.

Your humble servant, and affectionate brother,

PASCAL.

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## LETTER TO QUEEN CHRISTINA, OF SWEDEN, ON OCCASION OF SENDING HER HIS ARITHMETICAL MACHINE IN THE YEAR 1650.*

MADAM,

IF my health were equal to my wishes, I should desire personally to present to Your Majesty a work, the fruit of many years' labour, which I now beg leave, from this remote distance, to offer for Your Majesty's acceptance; and would not suffer any other hands than my own, to lay it at the feet of the greatest Princess in the world. This work, Madam, is a machine for making arithmetical calculations, without pen or counters.

Your Majesty is not unaware of the time and labour which are consumed in new inventions, especially when the fabricators of them are anxious to carry them to the highest degree of perfection: it would, therefore, be needless to state the amount of toil that I have bestowed upon this; and I cannot better describe it, than

* The above Letter is not derived from M. Faugère's collection. It has been lately re-published by M. V. Cousin; but it was previously extant in some editions of Pascal's writings. It is, in a certain degree, alloyed by the excess of adulation which was habitual in addressing persons of distinction at that period; and it may be, perhaps, thought to exhibit some of those antithetical blemishes which Pascal so rigidly avoided in his own subsequent compositions; and proscribed in his instructions upon the rules of style to others. It is, however, marked by much of his own felicity of expression, and elevation of thought; and it seems to show that, had he addicted himself to communications of such a nature, he would have shown as much proficiency in the language to be addressed to the great, as he afterwards evinced knowledge of the deportment that befits persons of high station. It is a striking fact, that, short as was the writer's life, it was long enough to afford him the opportunity to moralise upon the vicissitudes which afterwards befell the gifted, but eccentric object, of his courtly address.—*Vide* "Miscellaneous Thoughts." (Transl.)

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by saying, I have devoted myself to the undertaking with as much ardour as if I could have foreseen that I should, at some future day, be permitted to produce it before so august a presence as that of Your Majesty. But, Madam, if this distinction have not been the actual motive of my labours, it will be, at least, their recompense; and I should deem myself too happy, if the fruit of so many anxious hours should be to afford Your Majesty some moments of satisfaction.

I will not trouble Your Majesty with a detail of the particular parts of which the machine is composed. If, Madam, you should have any curiosity for such information, it may be procured from a discourse* addressed by me to M. Bourdelot.† In that paper, I have briefly described the history of the work, the object and purposes of the invention, the usefulness of its application, the difficulties attending the execution, the degrees by which it was accomplished, and the rules for its use. I will now only submit the cause which has induced me, as the crown and consummation of my undertaking, to present it for Your Majesty's acceptance.

I know, Madam, that I may be suspected of seeking to raise my own reputation by making this offering to Your Majesty; that the procedure, on my part, may be considered an unusual one; and that, instead of being offered on account of its superiority, it may be deemed superior only by reason of its being so offered. Such, nevertheless, is not the motive by which my conduct has been influenced. The achievement, Madam, is too great

* "*Avis nécessaire*," published by Bossut.

† Physician to Queen Christina.

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to be worthy of any but Your Majesty herself. What has prompted me to this step is, the union I perceive in your sacred person of two things, which impress me equally with admiration and respect,—sovereign authority, and profound science; for my veneration is unbounded for those who attain the highest elevation both in power and in knowledge. The latter, indeed, is, if I mistake not, what Sovereigns may as appropriately excel in, as the former. The same gradations are found in genius as in station; and the power of Kings over their subjects appears to me to be but an image of the ascendancy of genius over inferior minds,—amongst which they exercise an influence similar to the right of command in the body politic. This secondary sway appears to me even of a higher order than the other, inasmuch as the mind is more dignified than the body; and it is more reasonable in its nature also, because the one can only be gained and preserved by merit, whereas the other may be the accompaniment merely of birth or fortune.

It must be acknowledged, that both these domains are important in themselves; but Your Majesty, who is deficient in neither, will perhaps permit me to say, that the one without the other would appear to me incomplete. However great the power of a Monarch, something would be wanting to his glory, without a superiority in intelligence; and, however enlightened a subject, his condition is always lowered by his dependence. * Those whose nature is to desire

* "*Et quelque éclairé que soit un sujet, sa condition est toujours rabaissée par sa dépendance.*" The antithesis intended here by the writer does not seem very obvious. (Transl.)

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perfection, have hitherto been continually aiming to find a Sovereign uniting both these merits. Kings and philosophers have been hitherto but failures, and have accomplished only half their vocation: the perfect specimen was reserved for our age and times. And, in order that this assemblage of excellencies should be accompanied with everything to excite wonder, all this is found in a youthful Queen: and we see in her combined, the fruits of experience with the tenderest age; a leisure devoted to study, with the avocations of royal birth; and eminence in science, with the delicacy of the sex. Your Majesty, it is, Madam, to whom it has been given to furnish the world with the example it sought. In you we mark the exercises of authority dispensed under the illuminations of science; and science herself heightened by the splendour of authority. It is from this surprising union, that, while Your Majesty sees nothing superior to her power, she finds also nothing beyond her in knowledge; and is thus destined to become the admiration of every age.

Be your reign then, unrivalled Princess, one of a nature new and unexampled! May your genius bring under your sway all those who are not conquered by your arms. Reign by virtue of your birth, throughout many years, and over unlimited territories; but reign, also, by the force of superior merit, throughout every region of the earth! As for me, my lot being not cast under the former of your domains, I desire to make known to the world, that it is my glory to live under the latter; and it is to bear this testimony, that I presume thus to lift my eyes to my *Queen*, and to offer her this first token of my fealty.

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These are the motives, Madam, which have led me to offer to Your Majesty this present, although so unworthy of your acceptance. My insignificance has not been able to restrain my ambition. I have ventured to represent to myself, that although the name alone of Your Majesty seems to put in the shade everything unequal to herself, she will, nevertheless, not wholly reject what is inferior: were it otherwise, her greatness would be without homage, and her glory without praise. She will be willing to receive the fruit of a great effort of mind, without the stipulation that it should be that of a mind equal to her own. It is by a condescension such as this, that she will deign to hold communication with the rest of mankind: and, by all these considerations, an ardent admirer of Your Majesty's eminent qualities desires to be adopted, as

Your Majesty's obedient and faithful servant,

BLAISE PASCAL.

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*** The abruptness of this Note requires, perhaps, an apology; but its relevancy may become more apparent during its progress.

Not many months since, a devout and philanthropic individual, anxious to diffuse a conviction of the benefits and privileges of the Sabbath-day, especially to the lower orders of society, proposed a series of graduated prizes, to be awarded to the best compositions that should be written upon that subject; and limited the competition for such rewards to male writers from among the labouring classes. The multitude of the Essays, so produced, exceeded the utmost expectations of the sanguine. Nearly a thousand papers, the work of hands which, during the day, were busy with the shuttle, the saw, or the spade,—the production, it is probable, of hours taken from sleep, or needful refreshment,—*all* of respectable diction, and *many* graceful in conception and style; — this prodigious mass of Essays, produced within a period not exceeding three months, heaped the table of the umpires; and the difficulty was found to be extreme in selecting the few of such superior merit as to entitle them to the award of the proposed prizes.

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Among the papers thus sent in, one was found to be the production (under a misapprehension, probably, of the terms of the proposals) of a female writer; whose position in life, however, answered entirely to the stipulations required on the part of candidates. She was the daughter of labourers; and had passed her own life, partly in labour similar to theirs, and partly in the duties of a domestic servant. So great was the merit of the composition, that the umpires (while precluded from allowing it to enter into competition for the prizes) recommended—and probably assisted—the writer to place the piece before the public eye. It has been published accordingly; and bears the appropriate title of "The Pearl of Days."

Now for the relation which these remarks bear to the subject to which they are with this seeming extraneousness appended.—Like the laborious fruit of Pascal's genius, the production of this humble candidate comes before a sympathizing public under the grace and honour of *Royal patronage*. Unlike his, however, no thought of soliciting for it such a distinction ever entered the unambitious mind of the rustic author. With the prompt beneficence which enlists the Queen's sympathies on the side of every undertaking of usefulness, and labour of charity,—of every object, gracious and praiseworthy,—of everything "lovely, and of good report,"—a gift was spontaneously conferred upon the simple writer, richer than gold, and more valuable than popular applause:—the stamp of Royal approbation was placed upon the composition; and the little volume is permitted to appear under the especial sanction and recommendation of Her Majesty.

The following is the graceful dedication by which the work is preceded:—

"TO THE QUEEN'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

"MADAM,

"HUMBLE as is this tribute of loyalty, it is not without significance. "No Sovereign ever presented stronger claims to the love and allegiance "of her industrious subjects; and it tells how happy is our Constitution, "and how condescending is our Monarch, that pages written by a "labourer's daughter should find a patron in the Queen.

"Nor will the tract itself be without its interest to Your Majesty, to "whose royal halls such glory is added by the piety, virtue, and domestic "tastes so often found in Britain's lowliest homes.

"This tract discusses the temporal advantages of the Sabbath-day. "The same topic has recently engaged the pens of nearly a thousand "working-men. And it is not the least advantage of the Lord's-day, "that every labourer who learns to keep it holy, is another peaceful citizen "gained to the community; and another added to those best subjects who, "in their weekly assemblies, pray, 'God save the Queen.'

"I have the honour to be, &c.

"THE PROPOSER OF THE ESSAY."

"July 1848."

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The moral which I would venture to deduce from this digressive reference is this:—Years of exhausting labour were consumed by Pascal—then in the fulness of youthful talent—in a work, which his ambition deemed worthy alone of the patronage and ownership of the most gifted Sovereign of her time. That work is forgotten; its royal patroness is remembered only for perverted talent, and an unfeminine and eccentric career; and had its laborious inventor established no higher claim upon the memory of posterity, he too would have shared no other fate. Mark now the contrast. The Queen of England,—aiming not to measure strength with philosophers and literati,—the model of British womanhood; the Sovereign whose palace is the chosen seat of domestic virtues, and refined tastes; has already, by her homefelt graces and gentle benevolence, established an imperishable record in the hearts and remembrances of her great people. And—for the humble object of this august patronage—although her little volume will be unknown beyond the present generation, yet the fruit of her labour will assuredly survive, as long as the blessings of the "day of rest" shall beam upon a toil-worn nation, and wherever the heart of a labouring man shall be gladdened by its tranquil hours, and its sacred duties. (Transl.)

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# TREATISE

ON

# THE GEOMETRICAL SPIRIT;

OR, AS IT WAS FORMERLY ENTITLED,

# THE SCIENCE OF GEOMETRY IN GENERAL,

AND

# THE TWO INFINITUDES.

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## DISTINCTION

BETWEEN

## THE SPIRIT OF GEOMETRY,

AND

## THE SPIRIT OF INTELLECTUAL ACUTENESS.

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## GEOMETRY—QUICKNESS OF INTELLECT.

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# EDITORIAL NOTICES.

THE Treatise on "The Geometrical Spirit" was, with the exception of a very short passage given by Desmolets in 1728, published, for the first time, in Condorcet's Edition, under the title, "On the Manner of demonstrating Truth, and unfolding it to Man." Bossut afterwards printed it in a nearly authentic form in 1779, entitling it "Reflections on Geometry in general."

The first discourse on Logic, published at Port Royal, informs us that this composition of Pascal was made use of in compiling certain chapters on Logic, and that the late M. Pascal had entitled it, "On the Geometrical Spirit."

This latter title, also, is given to it in the small MS. in 18mo.; the only one in which we have found this composition, and in which it unfortunately appears in an incomplete state. It contains only the first portion of the Tract, which was intended to consist of two sections; as Pascal has himself indicated in a passage now restored, but which Bossut suppressed,—doubtless with a view to give the fragment the appearance of a complete dissertation.

We have noticed, in another place, the intimate connexion between this paper, and the one entitled, "On the Art of Persuasion." The fundamental idea in both is the same; on that account we have placed the one after the other; although an interval of several years, probably, occurred in the composition of the two. On the same account, also, are subjoined to the tract on "The Geometrical Spirit," some other short fragments, which seem by their subjects, viz., Acuteness, and Rectitude of Spirit, &c., naturally connected with that paper.

The treatise on "The Geometrical Spirit," seems to us to be of an earlier date than the "Art of Persuasion." Pascal 1657-58 is here found laying down views "more valuable than Geometry;" and it seems very possible that this fragment was contemporaneous with that epoch of his life, which was signalized by his return to the ways of religion, and his connexion with the society of Port Royal. (*French Editor.*)

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THIS Treatise has never before, I believe, appeared in an English dress. A few detached paragraphs only, and parts

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of the supplementary paper on the "Difference between the Mathematical and the Acute Mind," are to be found in the most complete collection of Pascal's "Thoughts" with which I am acquainted.*

The historical notice of this fine Tract furnished above by the French Editor, leaves nothing to be told respecting its origin, or the circumstances attending its publication. Equally superfluous would it be to dilate upon those beauties of thought and language, which must, I apprehend, commend the composition to every reader. The lucidness of arrangement, and elegance of diction, by which it is characterized, can scarcely fail to captivate every taste; while its depth of views and closeness of reasoning are calculated in the highest degree to fill and elevate the mind interested in the investigation of truth.

It is a redeeming feature in the edition which Condorcet produced of Pascal's Works, and which has been before referred to, that it was instrumental in bringing to light the greater part of this impressive paper. Had he, in fact, confined himself to animadverting upon Pascal in his scientific character, there would have been little cause of complaint; for the *Eloge* by which the Work is introduced constitutes a fine tribute from one mind of high philosophical attainments to another; and it is the more valuable, inasmuch as it must be regarded as extorted praise,—a testimony which, otherwise, the prepossessions of the writer would have willingly withheld.

Although, as observed by M. Faugère, there is a measure of connexion and similarity between this paper and the "Art of Persuasion," which will appear in a subsequent part of this volume, I have ventured to dissociate them; being desirous, with the view to relieve these specimens of severer reasoning, to introduce the reader previously to another production of Pascal—the Essay, "On the Passion of Love." This paper, as is known by those conversant in French literature, has been only recently brought to light; and, although it will probably be perused with some contrariety of feeling, (which will hereafter be adverted to,) it will be regarded as not the least interesting or striking of his compositions. (*Translator.*)

* Edinburgh, 1820. By the Rev. E. Craig, A.M., &c.

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ON

# THE GEOMETRICAL SPIRIT.

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THERE are three leading objects in the study of truth:—one, to discover it; another, to demonstrate it when discovered; the last, to separate it from all admixture of falsehood.

I do not propose to refer now to the first of these; but to treat especially of the second, in which the third is included. For if we know how to demonstrate truth, we shall be able to discriminate it from error; because, in examining whether the proof proposed is conformable to ascertained rules, we shall discover whether it be accurately demonstrated.

Geometry, which excels in all the three methods, has revealed the art of discovering unascertained truths: this is termed analysis; which needs not here be treated of, since it has been the subject of numerous excellent writings.

The art of demonstrating truths already discovered, and of elucidating them with irresistible proofs, is all that I now propose to unfold: and for this purpose, I have only to explain the method used in Geometry; for that science is able to teach by examples, without even



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resorting to discourse. And this being an art which consists in two leading processes,—the one to prove each individual proposition, the other to dispose all the propositions in their most appropriate order,—I shall arrange my remarks under two sections; the one comprising the rules for the conduct of geometrical, that is, methodical and perfect demonstration; the other, those of geometrical, that is, methodical and complete order. In this way the two together will combine everything requisite for the development of my design, which is to lay down a series of rules of right reasoning, for the proof and *discrimination* of truth.*

## SECTION FIRST. — ON THE METHOD OF GEOMETRICAL, THAT IS, METHODICAL AND PERFECT DEMONSTRATION.

I CAN in no better way elucidate the method to be observed in the conduct of an irrefragable demonstration, than by explaining that which is pursued in Geometry. But, first of all, it is necessary to furnish some idea † of a process yet higher and more excellent, but one unattainable by the powers of man; for that which goes beyond Geometry, goes beyond the human understanding. Yet some notion must be conveyed of this method, although it is one that cannot be reduced to practice.

This only perfect practice then, which would lead to demonstrations of the highest degree of excellence, were it practicable, would consist principally of these two

* Condorcet, in his edition, suppresses the first four paragraphs, and begins at the following:—"I can do no better," &c.

† This stood at first:—"And I cannot do this perfectly without previously giving an idea," &c.

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things:—the one, to use no term whose meaning had not previously been clearly defined; the other, to advance no proposition which could not be demonstrated by truths before ascertained: in one word, to define all our terms, and prove all our propositions. But, to follow the same order as that which I am now explaining, it is proper that I should state what I understand by a *definition.*

In Geometry, the only recognized definitions are what logicians call *definitions of name;* * that is, those names which are given to certain things designated by terms universally understood; and it is to such only that I am now referring.

The use and advantage of these is, to abbreviate discourse, in expressing by a single universal name that which could not otherwise be explained but by several terms; by which means, the name so agreed upon is divested of any other meaning which it might otherwise possess, and bears that alone which is thus assigned to it. Let us take an example:—

If we have occasion, in treating of numbers, to distinguish those divisible by *two,* from those which are not so divisible; then, in order to avoid the frequent re-iteration of this particular quality, we assign a name of this kind:—every number divisible equally by two is an *even number.*†

This is a geometrical definition: because, after clearly describing a quality,—that of divisibility equally by two,—we give it a name divested of every other meaning it may possess, and limit it to the one only thing so designated.

Hence it appears, that definitions are very arbitrary,

* "*Définitions de nom.*" † "*Nombre pair.*"



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and never made the subject of question; for nothing is more usual than to assign a name at pleasure to a thing, when we have once clearly defined its meaning. We must only be careful not to infringe the license, by assigning the same name to different objects.

Not that even this latter is not allowable, provided we do not confound their results or consequences, and attribute them indiscriminately to both the objects of definition.

Yet, if we fall into this error, we can remedy it by a sure and infallible method; that is, mentally to substitute the definition in the room of the thing defined; and to have the former so present to the mind, that whenever we, for instance, speak of an *even number*, we shall understand distinctly that which is divisible into two equal parts; and that these two things shall be so inseparably blended in our thoughts, that when the one is expressed in word, the other is at once responded to by the mind. For mathematicians, and all who possess logical habits, assign names to things only for the purpose of abbreviating discourse, and not to dilate or alter the idea of the things propounded. And they hold that the mind always supplies the requisite definition to these concise terms, which they employ only for the purpose of avoiding the confusion which a multitude of words is wont to occasion.

Nothing serves more promptly and effectually to defeat the captious cavils of sophists than this method; one which ought to be constantly present to the mind, and which is the only way to banish from conversation every kind of doubt and ambiguity.

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These points being premised, I now return to the explanation of accurate discourse; which consists, as I have already observed, in defining everything, and establishing everything.

Now this would unquestionably be a beautiful process, but it is one utterly impracticable; for it is evident that the first terms to be defined would suppose some preceding ones that must serve for their explanation; and, in the same way, the first propositions to be proved would suppose some others that had preceded them; and thus it is clear that we should never arrive at any primary terms or propositions.

Again, in pushing our researches yet further, we arrive, unavoidably, at primitive words which cannot be defined, and principles so clear that no other plainer ones can be found to serve for their demonstration.

Whence it appears that man labours under a natural and insurmountable incapacity to deal with any science whatever with absolute completeness.

Yet, does it follow from this that all order and method should be abandoned?

One method there is, that of Geometry, which is of an inferior kind indeed; insomuch as it is less convincing, but not in that it is less certain. It does not define everything, nor demonstrate everything; and in that respect it labours under inferiority: but, by means of our natural intelligence, it assumes only plain and established points, and therefore it is absolutely true; being sustained by its very nature under the deficiencies of discourse.

This method, the most perfect known to man, consists, not in defining or demonstrating everything, nor yet in

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defining or demonstrating nothing; but in that middle course, which is, the not defining things plain and intelligible to all men, and defining all other things; and not demonstrating things known to every one, but demonstrating all other things. This method is violated equally by those who affect to define and prove everything, and those who entirely neglect to do so, in regard to such points as are not in themselves evident.

This is what is perfectly taught by Geometry. It cares not to define such things as *space*, *time*, *motion*, *number*, *equality*, and various other matters of the same kind; because these terms so perfectly designate the things signified, to all who are acquainted with language, that explanation would tend rather to obscure than to instruct.

For nothing can be more wearisome than the conversation of those whose habit is always to define these primitive words. What is the necessity, for instance, to explain the term *man*? Does not every one know its meaning? And what is the utility of Plato's definition, that he is "an animal with two legs, without feathers"? As if my idea of him, which I derive from nature, and yet cannot explain, is not simpler and clearer than that conveyed by this useless and even ridiculous definition. Does a man lose his humanity by losing his legs? or does a capon acquire it by being stripped of its feathers? *

There are some who run into the absurdity of explaining one word by another similar one. I know some who define *light* in this manner: "Light is a luminous motion

* This is a recollection derived from Montaigne. (Essay 54, 2. ch. 12.) Condorcet has suppressed this and the two following paragraphs.

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of a luminous body:" as if luminous, could convey any other idea than that of light!*

We cannot attempt to define *being* (or *to be*) † without a similar absurdity; for we cannot define any word without beginning with the words "it is," either expressed or understood. To explain *to be*, then, we must begin by saying, "it is," and thus employ the word defined in giving the definition.

It is evident from this, that there are some words incapable of definition; and if nature had not remedied this deficiency by imparting to all men corresponding ideas, our language would be wholly confused; instead of which, we use some expressions with as much certainty and assurance as if they were previously defined in the most accurate manner; for nature gives us, without language, clearer conceptions than any artificial definitions.

It is not, however, because all persons have the same ideas of things in their essence, that I maintain it to be impossible and useless thus to define them.

*Time* is an instance of this. Who can define it? And why attempt it, when all men understand its general

* Pascal here alludes to the Jesuit P. Noël, with whom he had a warm controversy on the subject of "Vacuum." In his letter to him in 1647, he says, "The sentence preceding your last complimentary expressions defines *light* in these terms: 'Light is a luminous movement of rays composed of lucid, that is, luminous substances;' upon which, give me leave to tell you that it seems to me, you ought first to tell us the meaning of *luminous*, and a *lucid substance;* for, till then, I cannot tell what luminous means, and what is this lucid, or luminous body; till this is done I cannot tell what *light* is. And as in definitions we never employ the terms of the thing defined, I cannot understand yours, which states, 'light is a luminous movement of a luminous body.'"—(Edit. 1779, Vol. iv., p. 90.)

† "*L'être.*"

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meaning without any further definition? Yet are there various opinions respecting *time* in its essence. Some hold it to be the movement of some created object; others, the measure of that movement, &c. Thus it is not the *nature* of these things that is known to all; it is simply the relation between the name and the thing; so that on *time* being named, every one's thoughts are directed to the same idea; which suffices to dispense with the necessity of a definition; although afterwards, when we come to examine the actual nature of time, we differ in our views. Definitions are only intended to designate things named, not to explain their nature.

Thus there is nothing to prevent our calling *time* "the movement of a created object;" for, as I have already observed, definitions are subjected to no restriction.

But then, after this definition, there will remain two distinct objects designated by the name of *time:* the one, that which every one naturally understands, and which every one gives to it who understands our language; the other, this "movement of a created object;" such must be henceforth its new definition.

Care must be taken, therefore, to avoid ambiguity, and not to cause confusion. For it will not follow from what has been said above, that what we understand by the word *time*, is, in reality, the movement of any created thing. It was allowable to denominate these two things alike; but it is not so to make them agree in nature, as well as in name.

Again, to proceed with our illustration: "time is a movement of a created object;" but we must enquire what is understood by the word *time;* that is, whether

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we assign to it the ordinary and popular sense, or divest it of that, in order to give it, for the particular occasion, the meaning of "a movement of a created object." If we thus divest it of all other meaning, we cannot be gainsayed, and it will become an arbitrary definition; in consequence of which, as I have said, we shall have two distinct things bearing the same name. But if we leave it its ordinary sense, and yet maintain that what is understood by the term is "a movement of a created object," we are open to cavil. This is no longer an arbitrary definition, it is a proposition which must be demonstrated, if it be not self-evident; and then it will become a principle, or an axiom, but not a definition; because it can no longer be held, that the word *time* is the same thing as this "movement of a created object;" but it must be implied only, that what we understand by the term is this "movement" in question.

If I did not well know how necessary it is perfectly to understand this point, and how continually such cases as are here described arise, both in familiar conversation and in scientific discourse, I should not dwell so much upon it. But, from my experience of the confusion so commonly produced in controversy, by the want of the precision now inculcated, it is impossible to overrate its importance; and this precision of thought is, in fact, the object which I have principally in view in the present treatise.

How many persons, for instance, are there who suppose they have given a definition of *time*, in calling it "a measure of movement," at the same time that they leave it its popular sense. Yet, in doing this, they enunciate a



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proposition, and not a definition. How many think they have defined *motion*, when they say, "*Motus nec simpliciter motus, non mera potentia est, sed actus entis in potentia!*" Nevertheless, if they leave, as they do, to the term *motion* its ordinary sense, it is no definition, but a proposition; and thus, confounding definitions which they call "definitions of names," and which are really arbitrary, recognized, and mathematical definitions, with those that they call "definitions of things," which are not arbitrary, but subjects of controversy, they hold themselves at liberty to propound this kind, equally with the former: and, every one thus defining things in his own way—a license which is quite unjustifiable—all method and precision of discourse is lost, and irretrievable confusion induced.

This will never occur, if the order prescribed by Geometry be adhered to. This purely rational science never attempts to define mere primitive words, such as *space*, *time*, *motion*, *equality*, *majority*, *diminution*, *whole*, and others, which are understood by every one. But, with the exception of these, the terms it makes use of are so explicit and definite, that no glossary is required for understanding them; in short, all are perfectly intelligible, either by man's natural powers, or by the definitions thus given of them.

By this method are avoided all the difficulties experienced upon the first point,—that of giving definitions only where there is occasion to do so; and it is equally serviceable in regard to the other point,—which consists in proving propositions that are not self-evident.

For when it has reached the first ascertained truths, it

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pauses, and demands that they shall be granted; since it is in possession of no more effectual means for their demonstration; insomuch that all that is proposed by Geometry is perfectly established, either by natural intelligence or by demonstration.

From all which it follows, that if this science do not define and demonstrate everything, it is simply because it is impossible to do so.

It may perhaps appear surprising, that Geometry is not able to define any of those matters with which it chiefly deals:—it cannot, for instance, define *motion*, *number*, or *space*; and yet these are three things of which this science principally treats, and their investigations take the several names of *Mechanics*, *Arithmetic*, and *Geometry*,—the latter name being that which belongs to the whole genus and species of the science.

But this will not surprise us if we observe that, as this interesting science treats only of the simplest matters, that very quality in the things above named which fits them to be the objects of the science itself, renders them insusceptible of definition. Thus, the want of definableness is a merit, rather than a defect; because it does not arise from their obscurity, but from their clearness, which is such, that if it do not carry the amount of conviction which is commanded by demonstrations, it possesses all the certainty that attaches to them. It assumes, then, that we know what is understood by the terms in question, *motion, number, space*; and, without pausing for needless definitions, it penetrates and develops their wondrous properties.

These three things, which comprehend within them

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the entire universe, according to those words, "*Deus fecit omnia in pondere, in numero, et mensurâ,*" * have a mutual and necessary relation to each other. We can imagine no motion without some substance which moves: and that substance being *one*, its unity is the origin of numbers. Further, as the motion cannot take place without space, we have all the three things in question included in the first.

Time itself also is comprised in it: for motion and time are referrible one to the other;—speed and slackness, which are differences in movement, having a necessary relation to time.

Thus are these distinctive properties common to all these things; the knowledge of which, once acquired, unfolds to the mind all the wonders and all the sublimities of nature!

The chief of these comprehends the two infinitudes, which are combined in everything,—the one of magnitude, the other of minuteness.

For however swift a motion may be, we can conceive of that which may be still swifter, and outstrip the other; and thus go on towards the infinite, without reaching any degree of speed to which some addition may not be made. And, on the contrary, however slow the motion, it may be imagined to be yet slower, up to infinitude, without reaching such a degree of slowness as may not admit of an infinite number of other degrees, without falling into rest.

In the same manner, however great a number may be,

* Sap. xi. 21. "*Omnia in mensurâ, et numero, et pondere disposuisti.*"

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a yet greater may be imagined, and greater still beyond that, up to infinitude, without reaching one that cannot be augmented. And, on the other hand, however small a number,—be it a hundredth or a ten-thousandth part,—we may still conceive one yet smaller, proceeding downward to infinitude, without arriving at zero or nullity.

Whatever may be the extent of space, we may conceive of one greater and yet greater, and so on to the infinite, without reaching one which cannot be further enlarged. And, on the contrary, small as may be a space, one may be imagined yet more minute, before we attain to that which is susceptible of no subdivision.

The same thing holds in regard to time. We may always imagine a degree of duration, however long, without finality; as well as an extremely minute period, which shall yet be short of absolute cessation.

In a word, there is no motion, no number, no space, no period of time,—be it what it may,—that is not susceptible of increase or diminution: so that they all range between nullity and infinitude, and are yet at an infinite distance from the two extremes.

These are all truths which are incapable of being demonstrated; and, notwithstanding, they are the foundation and first principles of Geometry. But as the cause of their being insusceptible of demonstration is, not their obscurity, but their extreme obviousness, this incapability of proof constitutes no defect, but is rather an evidence of perfection.

From all which it appears, that Geometry is unable to define its objects, or demonstrate its principles, yet is it only for this one and satisfactory reason,—that both are

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in their nature so clear, as to convey to the understanding stronger conviction than could be done by discourse.

For what can be more evident than the axiom, that every number whatever admits of augmentation? Can it not be doubled? Or, again, is there any degree of speed, or any amount of space, that is incapable of being doubled?

And again, who can doubt that any number whatever may be divided into a half, and that half again into another half? Will such half then be a nullity? Or could the two halves, which would be two *zeros*, re-compose a number?

In the same way, is there any motion, however slow, which cannot be reduced in speed by a half, so that the same space may be traversed in double the time, and double that again? Should we then arrive at perfect repose? And could the two halves of speed, which would in that case become repose, re-constitute again the original movement?

Lastly, can any space, small as it may be conceived, not be divisible into two spaces, and those again into two more? And how could these two moieties, which would re-unite into their former extent, be themselves susceptible of no further division and extension?

There is no part of man's natural knowledge superior to, or more clearly demonstrated than this: yet, singular as it may appear, there are persons of the highest intelligence who are staggered by these conclusions, and cannot be brought to acquiesce in them.

I have never known any one who has held that a given space was not capable of augmentation. But I have met

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with several persons, of great acuteness in other respects, who were convinced (absurd as the idea is) that space might be divided into two indivisible parts.

I applied myself, then, to ascertain the cause of this confusion of ideas; and I found it consisted in this,—that those persons were unable to conceive of a continuous divisibility down to infinitude; whence they conclude that there was then not divisibility.

It is an infirmity of man to believe he possesses truth intuitively; and thence he is always disposed to question whatever is incomprehensible to himself. Whereas, in reality, his natural knowledge is nothing but deception; and he is prone to receive as true only those things, the contrary of which appears to him to be false.

And thence it follows, that whenever a proposition is beyond our comprehension, we ought to suspend our judgment, and not on that account to deny it; but apply ourselves to the investigation of that which opposes it; and then, if we find the latter manifestly false, we may boldly affirm the truth of the former, incomprehensible as it may be to ourselves. Let us apply this rule to the subject in question.

There is no geometrician who does not believe space to be infinitely divisible. This principle is as indispensable to mathematical science, as the soul is to man. And yet, no human being comprehends this infinite divisibility; and we can only be certified of the axiom by this one—yet sufficient—reason, that it is demonstrably false that space can be so divided as not to leave a portion yet further divisible,—that is to say, one which shall possess no dimensions.

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What, then, can be more absurd than to maintain that, in the continued division of space, we shall arrive at a point in which, when divided into two, each moiety shall be indivisible and without dimensions; and yet, that these two nullities of space, when re-united, shall again become space? I would ask those who entertain such an idea, whether they can conceive of two indivisibles being brought into contact? If they touch each other throughout, they are one,—and therefore the two together are indivisible; if not throughout, then they touch only in part,—then they are parts, and consequently they are not indivisible.

Let them confess, as indeed they do when they are pressed upon this point, that these propositions of theirs are as incomprehensible as the others; let them acknowledge, that it is beyond our capacity to conceive and decide upon these matters; and therefore that, the two opposing axioms being equally incomprehensible, it necessarily follows that one of the two must be true.

Now, as to these chimerical difficulties, and which originate only in our ignorance, they are opposed to this natural intelligence, and these solid truths. If it were true, that space is composed of a certain finite number of indivisible points, it would follow that two spaces, each being square, that is, equal and uniform on all sides, and each the duplicate of the other, the one would contain a number of these indivisible points, which would be double that of the other. Let them bear well in mind this consequence, and then apply themselves to range certain points in squares, till they shall have found two of them, of which the one shall contain double the

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points of the other;* and then I will give up all the geometry in the world to them. But if this be naturally impossible; that is, if it be an utter and absolute impossibility to range the squares of points, the one of which shall contain double the other, (as I could at once demonstrate, if it were worth while to stop for the purpose,) then, let them draw the proper conclusion.

And, to relieve the labour which may be experienced in certain efforts of thought, such as that of conceiving that space may have an infinity of divisible portions, seeing we traverse them in as short a time as that in which we may traverse this infinity of divisibles, it is necessary to premise, that it is not proper to compare things so disproportionate as the infinitude of divisibles with the minute period of time in which they may be traversed: but we should compare the entire of space with the entire of time, and the infinite divisibles of space with the infinite portions of time; and then it would be found, that an infinitude of divisibles would be traversed in an infinitude of instants, and a small space in a small period of time. Thus would disappear the disproportion which had before excited so much astonishment.

Finally, if it should seem strange, that a small space contains as many parts as a large one, let it be understood that the parts are proportionably small. Let a person, in order to get an idea of this fact, only observe the entire firmament on the surface of a piece of glass,

* "*Qu'ils s'exercent ensuite à ranger des points en carrés, jusqu'à ce qu'ils en aient rencontré deux dont l'un ait le double des points de l'autre.*"

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and he will find every part of the heavens reflected on every several portion of the glass.

But if it should be still incomprehensible, how portions so minute as to be imperceptible to us can be as susceptible of division as the entire firmament, there is no better method for conviction than to look at such objects through a glass of the largest magnifying power; thence it will be easily perceived, that, by the help of another glass yet more elaborate and perfect, such objects might be magnified, till they seemed to equal the firmament itself in all its wondrous extent. And then, when it is found that the objects in question are so easily susceptible of division, it will be acknowledged that nature infinitely exceeds all the efforts of art.

For, after all, who is to take upon himself to affirm, that these glasses have really altered the natural dimensions of the objects in question; but that, on the contrary, they may not have had the effect of restoring their original proportions, which our eyes had changed and contracted, in the same way as is done by the action of diminishing glasses?

We confess it to be painful to dwell upon such trifles as these, but there are occasions when it is necessary to do so.

It is sufficient to tell those whose minds are well informed upon these subjects, that two *nullities* of space can never form one *actual* space. But there are some persons who pretend to elude this axiom by the marvellous reply, that the two nullities of space may as reasonably form one space, as two units—neither of them being in itself a number—shall by their union compose a

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number. I reply, then, that such reasoners may as well deny that twenty thousand men compose an army, because each individual man is not an army; that a thousand houses form a town, while each house is not a town; or that several parts compose a whole, although each part is not a whole; or,—to continue the illustration from numbers,—they may deny that twice two parts make four parts, and ten tenth parts a hundred; although each single part does not form these aggregates respectively.

Now it is not consistent with accuracy of mind to confound, by these incongruous comparisons, the immutable nature of things with their arbitrary and technical names,—names which originate merely in the fancy of those who invented them. It is clear that, for the convenience of discourse, the term *army* has been given to a collection of twenty thousand men; that of *town* to a large number of houses; a *dizaine* * to ten units; and that from these accidents have arisen the names *unité, binaire, quaternaire, dizaine, centaine,* or whatever different titles they may bear, according to men's fancy; although the things themselves are, in reality, immutable in their nature, are of the same species one with another, and all bear a relative proportion to each other, but differ only in degree and amount; and although, according to these names, the *binaire* is not a *quaternaire,* nor is a house a town, any more than a town is a house. But although the house is not a town, it is not

* I am not aware that we have an English word to express ten units, or the other numerals that follow; and of which, therefore, the French nomenclature is retained. (Transl.)

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a *nullity* of a town; there is every difference between not being a certain thing, and being a nullity.

For, to investigate this point more closely, it should be understood that the only reason why *unity* is not placed in the rank of numbers is, that Euclid, and the earliest writers on Arithmetic, having to assign various properties which suited all the numbers except unity, in order to avoid the necessity of continually explaining —that such and such were the properties of all numbers except unity, excluded it from the term *number*, by that species of license which, as we have said, has been assumed in the use of definitions. So, if they had pleased, might they in the same way have excluded the *binaire* and *ternaire*, or any other, at their own discretion; for this is a matter purely arbitrary among the scientific, provided a general understanding exist as to such definitions; while, on the other hand, unity, and even the fractions, might have been placed in the rank of numbers, if they had thought proper. And, in fact, it is necessary to do all this in the case of general propositions, in order to avoid the necessity of saying every time, "*in all numbers, except unity and its fractions, such a property exists.*" This is the undefined sense which I have assumed in all that I have now advanced.

But Euclid himself, who thus legitimately takes from *unity* the designation of *number*, in order, notwithstanding this, to let it be understood that it is not *nullity*, but that, on the contrary, it is of the same species as numerals, thus defines homogeneous magnitudes: "Magnitudes," he says, "are said to be of the same species, when one being multiplied several times, it is found to exceed another."

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Consequently, as unity, being several times multiplied, may surpass a given number, it is unquestionably of the same species as the numbers, in essence and unchangeableness of nature, according to the same high authority, (Euclid,) who yet withholds from it the name of a *number*.

The case of an indivisible in reference to space is not the same as this. It not only differs in name, which is arbitrary, but it differs in species. An indivisible, however often multiplied, is so far from being capable of exceeding a space, that by the necessity of its nature it can never form more than one solitary indivisible, as has been already demonstrated. Now as this last proof is founded upon the definition of the two several things, *indivisibles* and *space*, it is necessary to proceed to a more complete demonstration of this point.

An *indivisible* has no parts; a *space* has separate parts.

Assuming this definition then, I maintain that two indivisibles united cannot form one space.

For, when united, they are each in contact with the other in some certain part; and thus the parts, so in contact, are not separate; otherwise they could not touch each other. Now, by the above definition, they can have no other parts; then they have no separate parts; then they are not *space*, by that definition which assumes the separation of parts.

The same thing may be affirmed of any other indivisibles which may be brought into junction, and for the same reason. And therefore an indivisible, however frequently multiplied, will never become a space. Thence

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it follows, that it is not of the same species as space, by the proper definition of things of the same species.

It is in this manner that indivisibles are proved not to be of the same species as numbers. Two unities may compose a number, because they are of the same species with each other; but two indivisibles, being not of the same species, do not constitute a space.

And thence it plainly appears, how little ground there is to compare the relation between unity and numbers with that between indivisibles and space.

But, if we would desire to find in the science of numbers a just analogy with the question we are considering in respect of space, it must be in the relation of zero to numbers. For zero is not of the same species as numbers, because, on being multiplied, it cannot be brought to exceed them; so that it is an actual indivisible of number, in the same way that an indivisible is an actual zero of space. And we may also find a parallel to it in *rest* and *motion*, and in an *instant* and *time*. All these things are heterogeneous to their magnitudes; for, being infinitely multiplied, they must still remain indivisibles, like indivisibles of space; and for the same reason. And then we shall find an entire resemblance between these several things: for all the magnitudes are divisible up to infinitude, without lapsing into indivisibles, and thus hold a middle place between infinity and nullity.

Behold, then, the admirable relation established by nature between these things, and the two marvellous infinitudes, which she thus reveals to man; not, indeed, to be comprehended, but to be the objects of our wonder

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and admiration! And, to bring these remarks to a close, I would add that these two infinitudes, although immeasurably different in their nature, bear yet an analogy to each other, in so far as the knowledge of the one necessarily leads to a knowledge of the other.

For in regard to numbers, inasmuch as they may be augmented without limitation, it clearly follows that they may equally be diminished in the same way; for if, for example, we can multiply a number up to one hundred thousand, we can obtain of the same a one-hundred-thousandth part, by dividing by the same number with which we multiplied it. And thus, every term of augmentation will become a term of division, by changing the whole into a fraction. Thus an infinite increase necessarily involves an infinite divisibility.

And, in space, the same relation is found between the two opposite infinites; that is, as a space may be infinitely enlarged, it follows that it may be infinitely diminished, as will be seen by the following example:— If we look across a glass at a vessel receding into distance, it is clear that the point on the surface, where we first observed the vessel, will naturally extend itself, in proportion as the vessel recedes. Then, if the course of the vessel be infinitely prolonged, the point will be perpetually enlarging; and yet will never reach that, in which the horizontal ray carried by the eye over the glass shall fall: so that it will be constantly approaching, but never attain it; dividing perpetually the space which remains under this horizontal point, without ever reaching it. Whence we see the inevitable conclusion to be drawn from the infinite extension of the vessel's course to the

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infinite division, and infinite minuteness of the small space remaining below this horizontal point.

Those who are not convinced by these reasonings, and remain still in the belief, that space is not infinitely divisible, can make no pretension to the mastery of geometrical demonstration: and although they may be intelligent on other subjects, they are but little instructed upon this.

A man may be very able in general matters, yet a bad mathematician.

On the other hand, those who are capable of clearly perceiving these truths may well admire the greatness and the power of nature, in this twofold infinitude with which we are surrounded on all sides! They will also learn, from these wondrous contemplations, to know *themselves*, —as beings placed between infinitude and nullity of space, between infinitude and nullity of number, between infinitude and nullity of motion, between infinitude and nullity of time. Thence we may proceed to form a just estimate of *ourselves;* and these reflections may be more valuable to us than the whole science of Geometry!

I have been induced to enter into this long discussion for the benefit of those who, being unacquainted themselves with these axioms of a double infinitude, may yet possess minds accessible to instruction on the subject. And although there are, doubtless, many to whom the considerations now submitted are familiar, it may be remembered, that to the former class they are necessary, while they may be not wholly without utility to the latter.

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# DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE SPIRIT OF GEOMETRY, AND THE SPIRIT OF INTELLECTUAL ACUTENESS.*

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In the Geometrical Spirit, the principles are palpable, but remote from common use: so that, from want of habit, we rarely entertain them; but when so entertained, they are clearly discerned;—and a mind must be perverted altogether, to reason falsely upon principles so plain that they can scarcely be eluded.

But in the case of mental quickness, the principles which it makes use of are common and obvious to every one. They are close at hand, and by our side. Nothing more is required than clearness of perception: but then it must be very clear; for these principles are so subtile and numerous, that it can scarcely happen but that some of them will escape observation. Now, the omission of any one principle leads to error; therefore the apprehension must be very acute to discern all the principles; and the mind should consequently be a very sound one, to avoid reasoning falsely upon known principles.†

All Geometricians would be acute, if they had a clear perception; for they never reason falsely upon ascertained

* "*Finesse.*"

† The above paper, up to this part, is not in Pascal's handwriting: the remainder is written by him.



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principles; and persons of intellectual quickness would be Geometricians, if they could fix their attention upon the recondite principles of Geometry.

The cause, then, of some of the latter class not being capable of mathematical studies is, that they cannot apply themselves to the principles of Geometry: but the reason why Mathematicians are not quick is, that they perceive nothing of that which is actually before them. And, being accustomed to the precise and palpable principles of Geometry, and never reasoning till they have clearly perceived, and, as it were, handled those principles, they find themselves at a loss in matters of more intellectual subtilty, which cannot be handled and demonstrated in this manner. Such things are scarcely to be perceived; they must be felt rather than seen: there is the greatest difficulty in conveying the impression of such things to those who do not perceive them of themselves: the points are so subtile, and so diversified, that it requires a very refined and clear perception to apprehend them and to come to just conclusions, without being able to reduce them to mathematical demonstration. Such persons are not possessed of the requisite principles for the purpose, and would experience the greatest difficulty in acquiring them. They are things that must be seen at a glance, and (at least, not beyond a certain degree) not by process of reasoning. And thus it is that Geometricians are rarely persons of quickness, or, on the other hand, quick persons Geometricians: for the latter aim at treating matters of pure intellect mathematically, with definitions and principles; and so expose themselves to ridicule, by mistaking the method of conducting that

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description of mental process. Not that a quick intelligence does not carry on somewhat of the same kind of operation; but it is done silently, naturally, and without artificial method: and this is a property of few minds, and those only of the highest order. Persons of quick intelligence, on the contrary, being accustomed only to decide matters at a glance, are surprised at being presented with propositions, at first sight incomprehensible, and to understand which, they must pass through sterile and uncouth definitions and axioms; and thus they are soon repelled and disgusted. There are, however, some minds naturally so poor, that they are neither quick in comprehension, nor mathematical in reasoning.

Mathematicians, then, and nothing more than such, have minds of a sound quality, provided everything be laid down for them by definitions and principles; failing this, they prove defective and wearisome.

And the understanding that possesses no quality but quickness, is wanting in patience to proceed beyond the mere elementary principles of things belonging to speculation and imagination, which are remote alike from ordinary perception, and from the apprehension of the world around them.



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## GEOMETRY—QUICKNESS OF INTELLECT.

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TRUE eloquence despises* eloquence: true morality† despises morality; that is, the morality of the judgment despises the morality of the understanding, which is subject to no laws.

For feeling is the province of judgment, as the sciences are the province of the mind. Quickness, is the quality of judgment; Geometry, that of the understanding.

To despise‡ philosophy,§ is to be truly philosophical.

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Things may be right in various senses: some are right under a certain order of circumstances, while, under others, they would be extravagant.

One class of persons deduce various consequences from a few principles; and this is a correctness of perception. The other deduce many consequences from things in which there are various principles.

For instance, the one kind may quite understand the

* "*Se moque de.*"

† "*La vraie morale:*" by which, I think, is rather to be understood, in this connexion, system, or method, than morality in its proper sense; and the spirit of the passage seems to be, "True eloquence despises mere systematic eloquence, and true morality despises mere conventional morality." (Transl.)

‡ "*Se moquer de.*"

§ Or, as before, "conventional or systematic philosophy." (Transl.)

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effects of water, in which there is little of first principles involved; yet the consequences are so subtile, that it is only an extreme accuracy of understanding that can follow them: and those persons would, perhaps, on that account, never become eminent Geometricians, because Geometry comprehends a large number of principles. And a mind may be so constituted, that it may be able to penetrate a small number of principles to the very foundation, while it may be utterly unable to comprehend a question in which many principles are involved.

It follows, then, that there are two descriptions of minds:—the one, that which is capable of penetrating deeply and with acuteness the consequences of principles;—and this is a sound quality of understanding;—the other, that which can comprehend a large number of principles without confounding them;—and this is the spirit of Geometry. The one of these qualities shows force and accuracy of mind;—the other, comprehensiveness and amplitude. The one quality may exist without the other;—the understanding may be strong and yet narrow; it may be comprehensive but weak.*

* This part is not in Pascal's handwriting.

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# A PREFACE

TO THE

# TREATISE ON VACUUM,

OR,

## ON AUTHORITY IN MATTERS OF PHILOSOPHY.

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# EDITORIAL NOTICES.

Bossut, who first published this fragment in the second volume of his edition of the "Pensées," has arbitrarily entitled it, "On Authority in Matters of Philosophy;" and has suppressed a portion of the text, which did not seem to harmonize with that newly-given title. He has further concealed, by means of some other suppressions of less importance, the interruptions (*les lacunes*) which are found in the MS. of P. Guerrier. We have now restored from that MS. the correct title, as well as the accurate text of the paper; that title being, "A Preface to the Treatise on Vacuum."

The Work itself is no longer in existence; at least, no trace of it can be found; and it is not improbable that Pascal himself never entirely completed the composition. M. Perier thus refers to it, in his Notice prefixed to his narrative in 1663, of the celebrated experiment of Puy-de-Dôme. "The "paper referred to in several passages of that narrative is "an important Treatise of M. Pascal respecting Vacuum, the "substance of which is lost, and the few fragments now "produced are all that remain."

The fragments mentioned by M. Perier are printed at the end of the "Tract on the Equilibrium of Fluids, and the Density of Air." We have found another very short fragment in the Autograph MS. of the "Pensées," which will be found at the close of this volume.

In regard to the date of composition of the Treatise, it appears from two letters of Pascal,—one to M. Perier respecting the experiments of Puy-de-Dôme, and the other, to M. de Ribeyre, that he had commenced the work in 1647, and was



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engaged in its completion in 1651. The Preface must, therefore, have been written in the interval, and at a period, probably, near to the latter. (*French Editor.*)

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In contemplating the loss referred to in the above notice, the reflection naturally arises,—What must have been the edifice, to which this composition (happily preserved, although not in so perfect a state as might be desired) forms so noble a vestibule! This paper is now, I believe, published for the first time in this country. It presents, in a more perfect form, perhaps, than any other of Pascal's works, those qualities of mind for which he was conspicuous,—caution, in not passing the limits assigned by the Divine Wisdom to the understanding of man, together with the widest latitude of investigation, where he knew that human skill and learning could, and ought, to expatiate;—in other words, the most implicit submission to the dictates of Revelation, combined with a curiosity that knew no bound, and acknowledged no authority, in the unexplored regions of human science.

These are the characteristics of true wisdom; and they are those in which the largest minds have ever been seen to excel. The most eminent among the heathen philosophers evinced an habitual consciousness that there was a knowledge superior to man's, although they vainly groped, amidst the shadows by which they were surrounded, to discover that truth for which their souls panted. And with the master-spirits among that small and favoured nation, to which alone, in the ages of antiquity, it pleased the Author of wisdom to dispense his revelations, this profound humility, and deep conviction of the nothingness of man in comparison with his Maker, was the pervading theme of their meditations. "What is man that thou art mindful of him; and the son of man that thou visitest him?" was the admiring exclamation of one of the most accomplished intelligences, as he contemplated the stupendous works of the Deity, and contrasted them with the helpless littleness of the creature. "Canst thou by searching find out God?" asked another of the sublimest of reasoners. "Counsel is mine, and

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sound wisdom: I am understanding; I have strength:"—these were the attributes which the wisest of men ascribed, as their sole possessor, to the Great Creator and Ruler of the heavens and the earth.

And when the mysteries of grace in the Gospel added a yet nobler theme of admiration and gratitude to the wonders of creation, it was still this high order of intellects;—the men who had explored deepest in philosophy and science, and collected with the largest hand the stores of human learning;—it was these, who were always found foremost in a meek reception of the great scheme of God for man's benefit, and loudest in the acclamation,—"O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

In this disposition of mind, as well as in others, our thoughts are naturally led to the points of resemblance between Pascal and our own countryman, the illustrious Bacon, whose greatest writings had not many years preceded his: yet some grounds of contrast also suggest themselves. In both there was the same deep reverence for Revelation; the same ardour in the pursuit of truth; and the same bold independence of antiquated shackles, in the investigation of science. Of the comparative amount and value of the contributions which each of these great men made to the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, it may be left to those the most competent to form their respective estimates. But in the rapid maturity of his mind, and the early period of life when his greatest productions were given to the world, the comparison must be allowed to be much in favour of Blaise Pascal.

There is another point in which an Englishman acknowledges also, and with pain, that the honoured name of Bacon loses in contrast with that of his more youthful competitor. It was the will of God, that Pascal should, far earlier than most other men, acquire that knowledge, which as much transcends the petty attainments of earth, as the narrow limits of time are surpassed by the mighty spaces of eternity! And, in the same proportion, were the great principles of

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religion seen to exercise a superior influence upon Pascal's heart and conduct. Yet it is most consolatory to believe, that Bacon, towards the close of his long, distinguished, but chequered career, became deeply humbled and penitent, under a conviction of the unhappy moral obliquities which, in spite of his capacious stores of earthly wisdom, had stained his progress. Faith exults in the belief, that he entered an immortal existence, in the enjoyment of the same supports and consolations which had cheered the untimely decay of Pascal; and it may, perhaps, be not unlawfully conjectured, that both these great minds are now—in a happy exemption from temptation and sin—pursuing, amidst the endless ages of eternity, with a kindred ardour (for in both the ruling passion showed itself strong almost on the confines of the grave) the investigation of that Truth, which they both so intensely loved!

Happy Pascal! to have been gathered to an honoured, although an early grave, with an unwounded conscience, and an unblemished fame! How might the laurels that cluster round his memory, have been blighted by a long exposure to the world, or by the noxious atmosphere of a court, the storms of political conflict, and the deceitful sunshine of Royal favour! (*Translator.*)

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# A PREFACE

TO THE

# TREATISE ON VACUUM.*

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Our deference for antiquity is, at the present day, carried so far, in matters wherein it ought not to have such weight, that we are wont to make oracles of all its opinions, and mysteries even of its obscurity: we can no longer propose novel views without peril; and the decision of an ancient writer suffices to overthrow the most palpable demonstrations. . . . . .†

It is not, however, my design to correct one error by the substitution of another; and to dispossess the ancients of all respect, because it has become the fashion to yield them too much.

I presume not wholly to discard their authority, in order to elevate that of reason in its place; although it has been by some endeavoured to establish their sole authority, to the prejudice of that of reason. . . . .‡

* 1 Coll. MS. du P. Guerrier, p. 30.

† There occurs here a blank of about ten lines.

‡ Ibid. two lines. In these Pascal doubtless laid down the distinction between those things which are respectively in the province of authority and reason.

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To draw this important distinction with exactness, it should be considered that the one class of authorities depends only on memory, and is purely historical,—having no object, but to ascertain what the writers themselves have delivered; the other depends on reasoning, and is entirely dogmatic,—its object being to seek out and discover concealed truths.

Those of the former kind are limited, in so far as the works in which they are contained . . . . . *

It is by this distinction, then, that we ought to regulate the extent of our deference to the two respectively. The respect we should have for . . . . . †

In subjects upon which we only seek to ascertain what the authors have written,—such as history, geography, jurisprudence, languages, and especially theology; and lastly, in all those things which either consist of simple facts, or originate in some Divine or human institution, we must necessarily recur to the writings of antiquity; since the whole that we can know of these things is contained therein.

It is evident, that we have it by these means in our power to gain a complete knowledge of the matters in question, and that nothing can be added to them from other sources.

If it is desired to know who was the first king of the French,—where geographers place the first meridian,—the meaning of words in a dead language,—and other things of this nature; what other means than the books written upon the respective subjects can give us the required

* A blank. † Ibid.

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facts? And who can make any essential additions to the information thus afforded, seeing we want to know nothing but what they furnish?

It is only authority that can instruct us in such things as these: but this authority has its principal force in Theology, because therein it is inseparable from truth; and it is by its means only that we attain to truth. So that, to furnish perfect certainty in regard to things the most incomprehensible to reason, it is sufficient to demonstrate them to be in the Sacred Writings; in the same way as, to prove the uncertainty of things apparently the most probable, it is only necessary to show that they are not contained in those holy records. The reason of this is, that their principles lie beyond the limits both of nature and reason; and thus the human mind, being too feeble to attain to such lofty conceptions by its own unaided efforts sinks in the attempt, unless sustained by an omnipotent and superhuman power.

It is otherwise with subjects that are within the province of sense or reason: authority in regard to these is useless: reason alone takes cognizance of them. The two departments have their separate prerogatives: in the one, authority is supreme; in the other, reason holds an undivided sway. But as subjects of this nature are proportioned to the capabilities of the understanding, there is in them also a power of extension which is regulated by it; its fertility is inexhaustible, and its productions may be multiplied altogether without limit and without interruption. . . . . *

* A blank.

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Hence it arises, that geometry, arithmetic, music, physic, medicine, architecture, and all the sciences which are the subject of experience and reasoning, must all receive continual augmentation in their progress to perfection. The ancients derived them only in their rudiments from their predecessors; and we shall merely transmit them to our posterity, in a state somewhat more matured than that in which they came down to us.

As the perfection of these things is the result of time and labour, it is evident that, had even our labour and our time been less productive than those of our ancestors, the two combined must notwithstanding be more effective than each individually.

The investigation of this subject must cause us to regret the obstinacy of those, who rely upon the weight of authority alone, instead of that of reasoning or experience, in physical matters; and it will convince us also of their criminality, who resort to reasoning only, in questions of theology, instead of resting in the authority of Scripture, and the Fathers. It may serve to give courage to those timid minds, which are afraid of striking out any novelties in physical science; and it should rebuke the presumption of those, who rashly propound crude and novel theories in religion. Yet such is the unhappy character of the age, that we see many novel opinions in theology, unknown to all antiquity, maintained with pertinacity, and received with applause; while such new hypotheses as are put forward in material philosophy—few as may be their number—shall be instantly branded with falsehood, if they are opposed, in the smallest degree, to received opinions; as if deference for the ancient

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*philosophers* were a matter of bounden duty, but submission to the most ancient of *theologians* were a mere compliment, which we may yield or withhold at pleasure! I leave it to all reflecting persons to observe the gravity of this error, which thus reverses the just and proper order of science; and I apprehend there are few who would not desire that the *license** under consideration might be extended to other subjects. For, while such innovations are utterly pernicious upon those questions† in which they are tolerated with a profane impunity, they are absolutely necessary for the perfecting of other branches of knowledge, which are, in themselves, beyond comparison of inferior importance, and in which, nevertheless, no such novelties may be ventured!

Be it ours to adjust with better discrimination our credence and our scepticism; and let us learn to set due bounds to our reverence for the dictates of antiquity. As this feeling is the offspring of reason, so also should it learn of her its limitations; nor ought we to forget, that if our forefathers had restricted themselves thus from adding to the revelations they had received, or those of preceding times had made the like difficulty in receiving the novelties propounded to them, they would have deprived, alike, themselves and their posterity of all the fruit of their discoveries.

Just in the same way as they availed themselves of the advantages which had been bequeathed to themselves, as a stock upon which to engraft further improvements, and as their happy boldness opened to them a way to the

* The word *liberté*, here conjecturally inserted, is in blank in MS.

† It should probably have stood, "those theological subjects."

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greatest acquisitions, so ought we to deal with those which they have transmitted to us. Taking them for our example, we should make these discoveries the means, and not the end, of our researches; and while we thus sedulously imitate, it should be our aim to surpass our predecessors.

For, what can be more inconsistent than thus to yield to our ancestors a deference, which they have not shown for those who preceded themselves? and to maintain for them that inviolable reverence, which they would not challenge at our hands?—inasmuch as they have been far from exhibiting such a sentiment towards those who possessed the same advantage over themselves.

. . . . . *

Nature conceals her mysteries; although ever active, she does not at all times reveal her operations: time, in the course of revolving ages, successively discovers them; and, although always alike and unchanged, they are not always equally known.

The insight into these secrets, gained by the intelligence of man, is continually augmenting: and as this furnishes the ground-work of physical science, the results and consequences develop themselves and multiply in proportion.

In this spirit it is, that we may, in the present day, propound views and hazard new opinions without showing contempt or ingratitude towards those of the ancients.†

The rudimental knowledge with which they have

* Five or six lines are wanting here. (Note of P. Guerrier.)

† A blank in the MS. which we have filled up as above.

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furnished us, has been the source of our own acquisitions; and in the advantages we thus enjoy, we are their debtors for our very superiority over them. Advanced by their aid to an elevated pitch of intelligence, a slight effort enables us to rise yet higher: and, with less labour, but with less glory also, we take a position superior to them. By these means it is, that we are enabled to discover many things which it was impossible for them to perceive. Our views have acquired more extension; and although they, equally with ourselves, made themselves acquainted with all that it was in their power to discover of nature, their actual amount of knowledge was less, and we see more of her operations than they.

How marvellous, then, is this indiscriminating reverence for the opinions of antiquity! It is made a crime to oppose, and a scandal to add to them,—as if they alone had left no truths to be discovered by their successors!

Is not this treating with indignity the reason of man, and putting it on a par with mere animal instinct? We annihilate the main difference between the two; which is, that the acquisitions of reason are incessantly accumulating, while instinct remains ever stationary. The cell of the bee was as exactly constructed a thousand years ago, as at this day; and each forms its little hexagon as skilfully at the first attempt, as throughout the whole of its brief existence. It is the same, under this mysterious guidance, with all the productions of the animal creation. Nature instructs her children in proportion to their respective necessities; but this fragile science is lost with the wants to which it owes its birth. Possessing it without study, they are denied the advan-

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tage of retaining it; and every time that it is imparted, it is new to the artificer: because the . . . . . * nature having no design but that of maintaining the animal in its position of a limited perfection, inspires it with this necessary knowledge . . . . . † always equal in degree, lest it should fall into decay; yet never exceeding the allotted measure, lest it should overpass the limits which she has prescribed to its powers.

With man, however, it is otherwise. He is formed for infinitude! Wrapped in helpless ignorance during the first stages of existence, he is constantly acquiring knowledge throughout its progress. He derives advantages not only from his own experience, but from that of his predecessors: for he has the power of retaining in his memory all the stores which he has himself acquired, and those which the ancients—who are to him as if ever present—have transmitted, in their writings. And, as he thus preserves the knowledge already gained, he has it in his power easily to make additions to it: so that we are in the present day, in a measure, in the same state as the philosophers of old would have been, if they could have survived till now; adding the knowledge which they then possessed to that which their studies would have accumulated through the lapse of intervening times. Thence it is, that, by our especial privilege, not only does each individual make daily advances in knowledge, but the whole body of men are, as ages roll on, in a state of constant progress; for the experience of successive generations is ever the same as that of the advancing years of the individual man. The whole human race,

* Blank. † Blank.

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throughout the succession of centuries, may thus be considered as one man,—ever living, and continually learning; whence we see how groundless is this inordinate deference for the antiquity of philosophy. As old age is the period of life most remote from infancy, who does not perceive, that maturity in this ever-existing being is not to be sought for in the times nearest to his birth, but in those the most remote from it? Those whom we call "the ancients" were, in reality, inexperienced in all things, and constituted but the infancy of man; and, as we have added to their acquirements the experience of succeeding ages, it is we who have succeeded to that antiquity, which we are called upon to revere in them.

Our Fathers are entitled to admiration for the improvement they made of their limited advantages; and their deficiencies should be excused, arising, as they did, rather from want of experience than from any defect of intelligence.

Were they not, for instance, excusable in the notion entertained of the "milky way;" when, the imperfection of vision not having yet derived the artificial aids which we enjoy, they attributed the apparent colour in that part of the firmament, to its greater density, which emits the light with more brilliancy?

But should not we be without excuse, if we rested in the same belief, now that, with the aid of the telescope, we have discovered an infinite number of small stars, whose abundant splendour we see to be the real cause of the phenomenon in question?

Had not they apparent ground for the opinion, that

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all corruptible bodies were enclosed within the moon's orbit, when, during so many ages, they had witnessed no corruption or generation* out of that space.

Ought not we, on the other hand, now to be assured of the contrary of this, since the world has seen comets kindle and disappear again, far beyond the limits of that sphere ?†

In the same way, on the subject of *Vacuum*, the ancients were justified in maintaining that nature would not endure it, because all their experience had led to the conclusion that she abhorred it.

But if modern experiments had been known to them, they would perhaps have seen reason to affirm, what they thought they were justified in denying;—for this reason, that Vacuum had in reality never existed. Thus in the judgment they formed, that nature would not suffer a void, they only spoke of nature under the aspect in which she was known to themselves; for, generally speaking, it would not be sufficient to have uniformly seen such a thing in a hundred or a thousand, or any conceivable number of instances, however numerous they might be; should there remain a single case unexamined, that one might suffice to impair the general proposition: and if a single one were to prove contrary, that one might . . ‡

In all matters, the proofs of which consist in experience and not demonstration, no assertion can be maintained, but by the general enumeration of all the parts and all the different cases. Thus, when we say, the

* "*Générations.*"

† The true nature of comets was still unknown in the time of Pascal. (Note in Bossut's edition.)

‡ A blank of two lines. (Guerrier.)

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diamond is the hardest of all substances, we mean, of all those substances with which we are acquainted; and we cannot, and we ought not to include such as we are not acquainted with. And when we say, gold is the heaviest of all bodies, we should be presumptuous in comprising, under this general proposition, any bodies which are not within our knowledge, although it be not impossible that such *may* exist.*

In the same manner, when the ancients assure us that nature abhors a vacuum, it is to be understood, that she would not endure any, according to all that had come under their experience and observation; and they could not, without presumption, include anything that was not within their own knowledge. Had it been otherwise, they would doubtless have come to the same conclusions as ourselves, and thus given to them the sanction of that antiquity, which some would, in these days, make the only principle on which science is to be founded.

Thus, without putting ourselves in an attitude of controversy with our predecessors, we may allowably maintain views opposed to theirs; and, whatever be the value of their authority, truth should always outweigh it, even though newly brought to light. Truth is in herself more ancient than any conjectures that were ever formed respecting her; and it would be to know little of her nature, to suppose that she *began to be*, only at the time when she began to be *known*.

(*Note of M. Guerrier.*) "I transcribed the above from a very imperfect copy, and full of blanks."

* This remark has been verified in the discovery of Platina long since Pascal's time. (Transl.)

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## NEW FRAGMENT OF A TRACT ON VACUUM.

Part I. l. 2, c. 1. s. 4.

WHAT can be more absurd than to say, that inanimate bodies have passions, fears, horrors: that insensible substances, without life, and even incapable of life, have passions; which presuppose, at least, a sensitive spirit to experience them? Further, if the object of his horror were a vacuum, what is there in vacuum to excite fear? What can be more unworthy and ridiculous?

Nor is this all:* if they have in themselves a power of movement to avoid a vacuum, have they then, arms, legs, muscles, nerves? . . . . . .

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*Again . . . . Their horror would be ineffective, if they had not power to act upon it. Therefore such power is largely assigned to them. It is not only said, they have a fear of vacuum, but they have a faculty of avoiding it, motion to avoid it! . . . . . .

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# ON THE PASSION OF LOVE.



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# EDITORIAL NOTICES.

THIS Discourse, which, with some slight inaccuracies, has been already produced in a periodical publication, could not escape our search, in the minute examination we have made of the Catalogue of the MSS. in the *Biblioth. Royale*, for the purpose of preparing the present work. In fact, there was not much difficulty in the discovery, for the Catalogue, not of the *Résidu de St. Germain*, but of the *Fonds de St. Germain Gèvres*,* furnishes us at No. 74, the following very plain and legible intimation:—

"*Système de M. Nicole sur la Grâce.*
*Q. Si la dispute sur la Grâce n'est qu'une dispute de nom.*
*Discours sur les passions de l'amour, par M. Pascal.*
*Lettre de M. de St. Évremont sur la dévotion feinte.*
*Introduction à la chaire.* (*Un Volume in* 4to.)"

This Table of Contents is repeated in the same terms on the first page of the MS.; and, in the body of the volume, the fragment in question of Pascal bears this title:—"Discourse on the Passion of Love.—*This is attributed to M. Pascal.*" *

With these external proofs of authenticity are combined those which may be drawn from the Treatise itself, and which force themselves upon the mind on the most cursory perusal. The very spirit and soul of Pascal, in characters of chaste and intense melancholy, reveal themselves in every page of the composition.

In conclusion, it is apparent to us, that the "Discourse on

* It will be remembered that it was M. Victor Cousin's Paper, the "*Revue des deux mondes*," in which this Discourse first appeared, which will explain the allusions in the above paragraphs. (Transl.)



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Love" connects itself with the biographical remains of Pascal by very interesting circumstances. We have alluded to these in the Introduction to this work, and we have shown with certainty that the date of this fragment must be fixed at about the year 1652-3. (*French Editor.*)

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This paper having so recently been brought to light in the circles of French literature, it is almost needless to remark, that it now for the first time comes before the English reader. It must be certainly considered as exhibiting its eminent writer in a new, and perhaps unexpected, light. Few, probably, to whom the "*Pensées*" of Pascal are a familiar book, or who have more extensively encountered him in the characters of a philosopher, a theologian, and a critic, will have been prepared to find him presenting, in his writings, a portraiture and analysis of the most romantic of human passions, and descanting upon the fluctuating tastes for the fair complexion and the brunette.

If differences of opinion, however, may be entertained as to the scope and tendency of some parts of this striking production, there are doubtless few who will not feel satisfaction in seeing so fine a composition rescued, after the lapse of nearly two centuries, from the oblivion with which it was threatened. Fewer still, it may be believed, will rise from its perusal without admiration of the high intelligence and philosophical acuteness which animate every part of the tract.

Were it not too hazardous to question the chronological accuracy of so laborious an Editor as M. Faugère, those most conversant with the genius of Pascal's writings would, perhaps, be inclined to conjecture a date for this production, earlier than the one assigned to it by that careful investigator. There are, throughout its pages, sentiments and descriptions which would lead to the belief, that the composition was one belonging to that period of the writer's career, when intellect and passion were the master-impulses of his life, and religion had not gained that ascendency over his

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large capacities, of which it was never afterwards dispossessed. This, however, was a period long anterior to that now attributed to the "Discourse on the Passion of Love;" but it was one, it should be remembered, which had forced on Pascal's mind, in a degree beyond that of most other men, the danger of an unrestrained indulgence of mere earthly passion, and the vanity of the principal objects of worldly pursuit.

The present French Editor of Pascal will not, indeed, allow that this production gives indication of having been written at that period of his life even, when all his biographers are agreed that the influence of high associations, and the pleasures of the capital, had tended to modify the strictness of his earlier convictions. In this opinion, a partiality by no means unnatural, has certainly warped M. Faugère's acuteness; for it can hardly be deemed credible, that the paper in question should have been written contemporaneously with, or under the same aspect of mind which produced, the Provincial Letters, or the materials for the Evidences of Religion.

If these views, then, be well founded, we cannot but feel disappointed to find it laid down, on so high an authority, that the happiest life is that which commences with love, and ends with ambition; and yet to meet with no qualifying suggestion, of that higher love to which all earthly attachments should be subordinated, and of that nobler ambition to please and glorify the great Author of our being, and of all its powers, compared with which the highest honours of the world are but a delusion and a snare.

In the same manner, amidst his vivid descriptions of the pangs of concealed attachment and unrequited love, we might, from Pascal, have expected some allusion to those consolations which may be looked for by the faithful and the pure, under the severest strife and tumult of passion;—consolations which none, perhaps, had experienced more largely than himself, and none knew better than he to administer effectually to others.

Once more: his reiterated assertions, that man must love, and that we are born only for the purpose of loving, might have been not disadvantageously accompanied with some

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restrictive statements. Pascal seems, for the moment, to have overlooked the large number to whom, in every community, from various causes, it is forbidden—in the sense of sexual passion—to indulge in love; and this, too, not necessarily from the effect of ascetic resolutions, or monastic constraints. And it should have occurred to him, how often, in the case of such persons, the warm affections, when diverted from this their more congenial channel, are seen to find a compensatory vent in diffusive kindness and benevolence, flowing through the circles by which they are surrounded.

But it is dangerous farther to pursue reflection upon the sentiments which a Pascal should, or should not, have expressed. One more remark only may be permitted. The passion of love can never be treated with unqualified benefit, till the view be carried forward to that period when it ceases to be a "passion." To minds of sensibility, indeed, the condition is a necessary one, at the outset of attachment; but it is that which is by no means the most productive of satisfaction or benefit. It is when these unwholesome and dangerous fervours have subsided; when "love" has become—to use Pascal's own fine expression—a "*haute amitié;*"—when rapture has merged in the calm repose of confidence and esteem; —when even the discovery of common infirmities has (as it will ever do in well-regulated minds) induced only mutual forbearance, and called out a tenderness more grateful than the ardours of youth;—and, yet more, when, under the benignant influence of a cheering faith, advancing age, and the conviction of human frailty, serve only to kindle livelier hopes of an indissoluble union in a purer state of existence;—it is then only that the "passion of love" can be beneficially experienced; and that "the difference of the sexes," referred to by Pascal, fulfils the high purposes for which it was designed by the Creator.

If these views of the defects in the writing in question be admissible,—and I apprehend they are such as will suggest themselves to many thoughtful readers,—the cause may, perhaps, be found in that logical precision which was so characteristic of the great writer's mind, and the strict adherence to

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unity exhibited in all his productions. *Passion* was his theme; and in its delineation he seems not to have allowed himself, for purposes of qualification or moral, to turn to the right hand or the left. The unity is preserved, and the closeness and concatenation of his topics are unrivalled. But it may be questioned whether, if he had allowed himself in some such restrictive deviations as those now suggested, the tendency of the Essay might not have been more improving, and its spirit more like that of Pascal.

Yet, after making these, or any such deductions, where shall be found a superior—perhaps it may be said an equal—to this beautiful production? It combines the accuracy of the logician with the glow and fervour of the romancer and the poet. It seems to come full and fresh from the heart; yet never degenerates into weak sentiment, or shallow rhapsody. And it acquires its crowning interest from the conviction that it is a transcript of his own feelings;—whether it be believed, according to one of his present distinguished commentators, that the object of his affections,—her name, station, and attractions,—are unrecorded and lost; or that, according to another, (and probably the best informed,) that object stands now disclosed in all her beauty, youth, and high rank. Whichever of these alternatives be adopted, (for between them the choice is not, perhaps, very important,) the conviction is strong indeed, that the emotions he has here so vividly depicted, were drawn from the resources of the writer's bosom, and the conflicts he describes had found their counterpart in his own experience. (*Translator.*)

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# ON THE PASSION OF LOVE.

MAN is born a being of thought; he cannot exist a moment without it; but those exalted contemplations which would form his happiness, were he able to sustain the exertion, fatigue and oppress him. They constitute a uniform state of existence to which he is not adapted: he needs action and change; that is, he craves the excitement of those passions whose deep and vivid sources he is conscious of possessing within his own bosom.

The passions most common in man, and which give birth to many others, are love and ambition. They have no necessary connexion with each other, yet are they often found united; their tendency, however, is to weaken—not to say destroy—each other.

However capacious a mind may be, it can be under the influence of but one great passion at any one time. When, therefore, love and ambition are found united, they exercise only a divided power in the man, compared with that which would be exercised by either of them alone. Their sway is not limited by years: youth and old age both feel their influences. They spring up in the very morning of life, and wither often only in our grave. Nevertheless, as such feelings require much warmth for their maintenance, youth seems the period of life most natural to their exercise: as age advances,



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they are sometimes,—although rarely,—found gradually to subside.

The life of man is mournfully brief. It is usual to compute its term from his first entrance into the world; but, for my part, I am more disposed to compute it from the time when reason receives its birth, and begins to exercise its due influence over conduct;—a period usually not earlier than our twentieth year. Up to that time man is but a child; and a child is not a man.

That life is the happiest which commences with love, and ends with ambition. Could I make a choice, it is that which I should prefer for myself. As long as the vital warmth of youth continues, man loves, and may be loved; but that fire progressively decays, and is extinguished: it is then gracefully and nobly replaced by ambition. A life of agitation is pleasing to great minds; but those of an inferior order find no satisfaction in such excitement: they are mechanical in everything. Therefore it is, that when love fills up the commencement, and ambition the close of life, man attains to the largest measure of happiness of which his nature is capable.

In proportion as the mind is elevated, the passions are powerful; for, passion consisting only of sentiments and thoughts appertaining to the spirit, although set in motion by the body, it is evident that they are the very spirit of a man itself, and come by degrees to fill up its entire capacity. I speak here only of the more ardent passions; as for the others, they are often blended and confused in their nature; but this is never the case with those of the most intellectual order.

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In a great mind everything is great.

It may be asked, is love necessary to man? This is not a matter for reasoning, but for feeling. We deliberate not upon it; we are carried irresistibly towards the conclusion; and we deceive ourselves when we make it a subject of discussion.

Purity* of spirit produces corresponding purity of passion; therefore it is, that a pure and elevated mind loves with intenseness, and has an intense perception of the qualities which excite its ardours.

There are two descriptions of minds; the one demonstrative, and the other imaginative.†

The first sort are slow, rigid, inflexible in their movements; the latter possess a quickness of perception which fastens at once on the pleasing qualities of the object beloved. The eye opens a communication with the heart; and what passes without, is an index to the movements within.

When both these characteristics of mind are united, love then affords the largest measure of enjoyment. Then are possessed both the power and the flexibility of spirit, which are wont to inspire a mutual eloquence in communication.

We are born with an instinctive propensity for love, which develops itself in proportion as the mind acquires maturity; and prompts us to an admiration of what

* "*Netteté.*" This idiomatic expression is not perfectly rendered by the above word "purity," but it is difficult to find a better. (Transl.)

† "*Il y a de deux sortes d'esprits: l'un géométrique, et l'autre que l'on peut appeler de finesse.*" See remarks on the difference between the two classes of minds, in the notes following the tract on "The Geometrical Spirit." (Transl.)

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appears deserving of our regard, although we know not properly on what it is founded. Who then can doubt that we exist only to love? Disguise it, in fact, as we will, we love without intermission. Where we seem most effectually to shut out love, it lies covert and concealed: we live not a moment exempt from its influence.

Man cannot find his satisfactions within himself only; and, as love is essential to him, he must seek the objects of his affection in external objects. He can find these only in beauty; but as he himself is the fairest being that the hand of God has formed, he must look within himself for a model of those beauties which he seeks elsewhere. All have the power to discover in themselves the elements of these qualities; and, in the degree in which we perceive in others likeness or dissimilarity to them, we form our ideas of beauty or deformity in all things. Yet, although man is ever seeking to fill up the void of which he is conscious in himself by means of external objects, he finds it is not everything that can satisfy him. Such is the largeness of his heart, that it must be something resembling himself, and approximating to his own qualities. That kind of beauty, therefore, which satisfies man, must not only contribute to his enjoyment, but partake of his own resemblance. It is restricted and fulfilled in the difference of the sexes.*

Nature has so impressed this truth upon our minds, that we all find a predisposition towards it; it demands no skill or research for its discovery; we find a void

* "*Elle* se *restreint et elle* s'*enferme dans la différence du sexe.*" In the MS. it stands, "*Elle* la *restreint et elle* l'*enferme*," &c., which is altered as above, because it is probably an inaccuracy in transcribing.

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within the bosom, and this it is which fills it. But it is a thing to be perceived rather than described. It is only those whose ideas are confused and undigested, that are unconscious of the truth.

Although this general idea of beauty is ineffaceably engraved in our hearts, we find a great difference in its individual application. But this consists only in the variety of our modes of regarding what gives us pleasure. For it is not beauty only that we desiderate, but a multitude of circumstances combined with it, which have their origin in our own dispositions; and in this sense it may be said, that all possess in themselves the original of that beauty which they look for externally. It is female attraction, however, which most commonly develops that original. As women exercise an irresistible sway over the minds of men, they either impress upon them those attractions which they themselves possess, or those which men admire; and by this means they enhance and heighten this original idea of beauty. For this reason, at various periods, different styles of beauty—the fair or the brunette—may be admired; and the divided taste of females for these several kinds of beauty causes the difference in man's admiration of them also.

Fashion and country often regulate what is called beauty. It is indeed strange that such a thing as custom* should mingle even with our passions. And this does not, indeed, prevent persons from having their own standard of beauty, by which they estimate others: on this principle it is, that every lover deems his mistress fairer

* "*Coutume.*" The MS. has "*constance,*" which is evidently an error of the copyist.

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than all other women, and sets her up as a universal model.

Beauty is found in numberless objects. That which most concentrates it, however, is Woman; and in her, intelligence greatly enhances her charms. If a female aims to please, and possesses some personal attractions,—nay those even but in a moderate degree,—she is sure to succeed; and if even she is but little an object of notice on the part of the generality of persons, and makes no excessive effort to be admired, she will still succeed in attracting individual affection. There is always some accessible spot in the heart of man, into which she will find an entrance.

Man is formed for enjoyment; this is a matter of feeling, and needs no demonstration. He follows then the dictates of reason in seeking pleasure. But his heart is often possessed by passion, without knowing how it originated.

The mind may be equally absorbed by real or fallacious pleasure. What matters it that it is false, if we only believe it to be true?

There are those who can become enamoured even by merely descanting upon love. Nothing is more easy; it is that passion which, of all others, is the most natural to man.

Love knows nothing of age; it is ever youthful. So the poets tell us; and therefore they represent it to us under the form of infancy. This again we feel, and have no need to make it matter of investigation.

Love reciprocally quickens, and is increased, by the intellect. It requires intellectual power for its develop-

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ment. He that loves, explores daily new methods to please; he feels that he must please, and he succeeds.

We possess a certain species of self-love which tells us we are important to others; thence we are fond of being loved. Ardent in our aim, a glance from the beloved object tells us if we have succeeded. The eye is the interpreter of affection; but it is the person interested alone that can understand its language.

Man in solitude is an incomplete being; he needs companionship for happiness. He seeks this most commonly in a condition on an equality with his own, because liberty of choice and opportunity are favourable, in such a state, to his views. But sometimes he fixes his affection on an object *far beyond his rank;* and the flame burns more intensely in proportion as he is forced to conceal it within his own bosom.

When love is conceived for one of elevated condition, ambition may at first co-exist with passion; but the latter soon obtains the mastery. It is a tyrant, which admits of no rivalry; it must reign alone; every other emotion must subserve and obey its dictates.

An elevated attachment is more suited to fill the heart of man, than those mere common-place feelings which are sometimes entertained for an equal in station. Ordinary objects seem but to float on the surface of a large capacity: it is the profounder emotions alone that arrest and dwell in the spirit.

Let it be observed that we often lay down positions, which can only be brought to proof by compelling those whom we address to turn their thoughts within *themselves*, and there discover the truth of our assertions. In

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this way must be found the proofs of what I am now stating.

If a man be endowed by nature with a sensitive and delicate spirit in the ordinary concerns of existence, it will be the same in love. For, as it is natural for him to be moved by external objects, when he finds in them what is repugnant to his tastes, he recoils from, and shuns them. This delicacy originates in a pure and elevated degree of intelligence. Thus we may fancy ourselves delicate in taste without being really so; and others may then justly censure us: whereas, in their estimate of beauty, all have their own exclusive and individual standard. Nevertheless, there are degrees between the full possession of this fastidiousness, and the entire absence of it; and it must be granted, that if a person has a wish to possess refinement, he is not far from actually acquiring it. Females like to perceive * a delicacy of taste in men; and this seems to me to be their most vulnerable point: they are pleased to see all except themselves regarded with indifference, and themselves only the objects of admiration.

The higher qualities of intelligence are not to be acquired by effort; they can only be enlarged and perfected. Thence it is obvious, that refinement is a gift of nature, and cannot be gained by artificial means.

In proportion as the intellect is refined, we become alive to beauty of various kinds; but it is otherwise with the lover,—all beauty is to him concentrated in one.

Is it not obvious, that when a female throws out her whole heart to impress that of another, her own must

* MS. "*voir*," corrected by the same hand to "*apercevoir*."

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be left vacant, to be similarly impressed? I know there are those who question this opinion; yet can it be an unreasonable one? It is natural that we should give an equivalent for that which we take away.

To brood continually upon one train of thought, fatigues and, in the end, destroys the mind. For the strength, therefore, and permanence* of pleasure in an attachment, it may be desirable that we should sometimes not be conscious that we love. And this is no infidelity; for it is presupposed that affection is felt for no other object, and then it is nothing more than to regulate, in order to increase, the force of passion. This is an involuntary impulse: the mind yields to its direction of its own accord: it is conformable to, and is impelled by nature. Yet must it be acknowledged, that this is a painful condition of humanity, and that it would be more pleasing not to be thus compelled to seek variety in our emotions; but for this there is no help.

To love, without daring to reveal our passion, has its suffering, but it has also its joys. Who can describe the delight of moulding every action as in the approving view of one who is the absorbing object of our admiration? To study daily new methods of evincing our devotion, and to be as assiduous for *her* satisfaction, as if we were in the enjoyment of her unrestricted communications? How will the eye in a moment kindle, and as quickly lose its fire! And, although we are well assured that she who is the cause of all these emotions is unconscious of them, who would desire to forego the secret joy that such

* "*Durée.*"—This word supplies a blank in the MS.

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fluctuations of feeling afford us? We could wish for a hundred tongues to reveal to the beloved object our thoughts; but, as that privilege is denied us, we seek a substitute for it in the silent eloquence of action!*

Up to this point, all is delight; and the mind is intensely interested. This is happiness; for, to keep alive passion, there must be no void in the spirit, but a continued succession of agreeable emotions. Yet this is a state of mind that cannot last long; for, being solitary when we ought to experience participation and sympathy, the very intenseness of the excitement leads to its more speedy exhaustion.

Although passion changes not, it demands novelty in its manifestations; the mind finds a satisfaction in it; and those who know best how to procure it, are most successful in obtaining a return of attachment.

After a certain time, the satisfaction just described begins to subside; and sometimes, when no encouragement from the object of devotion is received, a miserable revulsion of feeling ensues: then the heart is torn and convulsed by a throng of warring passions. Again, perhaps, when at the lowest pitch of despondency, a ray of hope is permitted to rekindle all the man's former joys! Sometimes this is a mere coquettish amusement on the part of his mistress; but, occasionally, the semblance of compassion covers a reality of tenderness. Then comes the fulness of indescribable delight!

A firm and solid attachment commences always with the eloquence of action: the eye has the principal part

* See Provincial Letters; Appendix—Mademoiselle de Roannez. (Transl.)

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in its demonstrations. Something must be conjectural, but it will be a well-founded conjecture.

When two persons experience a mutual tenderness, there is then no longer conjecture existing between them; or, at least, one may conjecture the feelings of the other, while that other may not understand,—may not *dare* to understand!

When a person is in love, he seems to himself wholly changed from what he was before; and he fancies that everybody sees him in the same light. This is a great mistake; but reason being obscured by passion, he cannot be convinced, and goes on still under the delusion.

When we love, we persuade ourselves that we may elicit a corresponding affection; this gives rise to fears.

The length and deviousness of an attachment serve only, in a mind of sensibility, to heighten its pleasure.

There are minds of a high order of refinement, which are not easily driven from hopes once entertained. Others there are which are grosser in their nature, and can less easily contend with difficulties. The former indulge longer in the dreams of love, and with more enjoyment to themselves; the other class are more ardent and impetuous in passion, but it is more short-lived.

The first effect of genuine love is, to inspire a profound respect: veneration is ever the fruit of deep attachment. This is as it should be: nothing seems to a true lover so great as his mistress.

Writers can tell us very little to any purpose of the passions of their heroes, without having *themselves* experienced them.

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To indulge in attachment to various objects is as hateful as it is unjust.

The silence of love is more powerful than declamation. It derives advantage from discouragement: then comes the eloquence of mute submission, more winning than the most impressive speech. A skilful suitor prevails most under repulses. Whatever be his powers, it is good for him, on such occasions, that they should be in abeyance. All this, however, must arise spontaneously and without premeditation.

The deepest attachment may often be conceived when the beloved object is *unconscious* of the passion; the most inviolate fidelity preserved, when even our love is unknown. But such love as this is of the highest and purest order.

We acquire a knowledge of the minds and passions of others only by comparing our own emotions with theirs.

I agree with one who holds that in love, fortune, friends, relatives, are all forgotten: this is the tendency of the most elevated attachments. A man in love feels, for the time, that he wants nothing but the object of his preference: the mind is filled: there is no room for other care or solicitude. Passion always impels to extremes: thence it is that we become indifferent to the opinion of the world; we satisfy ourselves that we have right on our side, and ought not to be the object of censure. The man is absorbed by passion; he possesses not even the rudimental power of reflection.

It is not a mere caprice of fashion,* it is an obligation

* "*Coutume*;" MS., "*Constance.*"

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of nature—that to obtain female favour, the advances must be on the part of men.

Love gives birth to qualities which had no existence before. A mean man becomes great, and an avaricious, liberal;* and each seems to forget his former disposition. The cause of this is, that some passions have the effect of contracting and freezing the soul; others cause it to expand, and flow out under their genial influences.

It has been usual, but without cause, to underrate, and regard, as opposed to reason, the passion of love. Reason and love are, however, consistent with each other. It is a precipitation of mind that thus carries us into partialities and extremes; but it is still reason, and we ought not to wish it to be otherwise. We should, in that case, only prove man to be a very disagreeable machine. Let us not seek to exclude reason from love; for they are inseparable. The poets were wrong in depicting love as blind; it should be our endeavour to take away the bandage from the eyes, and restore to them their true use and enjoyment.

Those minds which are most fitted for love require action and vicissitude. Filled with internal agitations, they seek corresponding movement without; and such a mode of life gives prodigious fervour to passion. Thence it is, that persons of refined habits succeed better in their suits than rustics, and the courtiers than the *bourgeois;* the one possessing vigour and animation, while the others

* Steele, in one of his papers in the "Spectator," says, he was never capable of a generous action but when in love. The sentiment, from him, is not of much value; it is adduced only on account of the coincidence. (Transl.)

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pass their existence in a state of dulness and uniformity. The life of storms is that which excites, penetrates, and overpowers.

A man under the influence of love seems to acquire a new soul; passion elevates and exaggerates him; but then everything in him ought to be proportioned; otherwise, a want of harmony and consistency is seen, which is offensive.

The beautiful and the pleasing are identical; and we all have our respective ideas of them. I here refer to a species of moral beauty, which consists in the language, and the external deportment. These constitute the methods of rendering ourselves agreeable: personal attraction, however, must contribute: but this is not to be acquired.

Some men have laid down a standard of attraction * so exalted that it can never be realized. It is more rational to regard the charms which most generally acquire the ascendency, as consisting in simple manners, with a facility of disposition and quickness of intelligence. To secure attachment, the two latter qualities are indispensable. There must be nothing rude, nothing dull: practice supplies all the rest.

Respect ought not to be carried so far as to extinguish love; but the two should mutually blend with and sustain each other.

Spirits of a high order are not capable of a frequent succession of attachments; that is to say, of strong passion, which fills and overpowers minds of that descrip-

* "*De l'agréable :*" MS. "*désagréable.*"

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tion like an inundating torrent. When once they love, they love largely and long.

It has been said that some nations are more given to the tender passion than others; but this is not the case, or, at least, not in every sense. Love, being an emotion of the mind, must be the same in every country. Climate may, indeed, in some measure alter its manifestations; but that is a mere accident.

It is with love as with the understanding; one person supposes he has as much sense as another, and can love as well as another. But a mind of refinement carries its attachments into the minutest things, and this is not the case with others. It requires, however, a delicate perception to remark this difference.

It is scarcely possible to assume the appearance of attachment, without approaching very near to love itself, or at least to a certain measure of it; for, to bear the semblance, a person must possess the dispositions, the ideas, the language even of real affection. The reality of passion is not so easily disguised as severer realities. For the former are required warmth of temperament, and a prompt and lively intelligence; the latter is easily accomplished by deliberation and flexibility of mind.

At a distance from the object of attachment, we revolve much what we purpose to do or say; we approach, and all is irresolution and embarrassment! How is this? It is that, while absent from the beloved one, reason is calm and undisturbed; but when we draw near, she is shaken from her seat. Resolution requires presence of mind, which is destroyed by violence of passion.

In love, the fear of endangering all paralyzes our

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advances: we must go on; but how far, and up to what point? We are ever in fear till that stage is reached. Nor can prudence avail to maintain our position when it is acquired.

Nothing perplexes a lover so much as to see symptoms of favour, without daring to believe their reality; the mind vibrates incessantly between hope and fear; but, at the last, the latter ever preponderates.

Under the influence of strong passion the beloved object seems new in every interview. Absence instantaneously creates a void in the heart. But then, the joys of re-union! Hushed, at once, is every care and every disquietude! But this must be at an advanced stage of attachment: when it is but in its infancy, or not much matured, one source of solicitude may subside, but it is soon succeeded by others.

Then, amidst fast succeeding troubles, the man ever longs for the presence of his mistress, in the hope of some alleviation of his sufferings: they meet at length, and suffer perhaps more than ever! Past evils are forgotten; the present alone are felt; and it is* from them that our impressions are ever derived. In such circumstances, who does not pity a lover?

* *C'est*, wanting in the MS.

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ON THE

# ART OF PERSUASION, OR ELOQUENCE.

## (L'ART DE PERSUADER.)



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# EDITORIAL NOTICES.

"THE Art of Persuasion" was first published by P. Desmolets, in his "*Continuation des Mémoires de Littérature et d'Histoire,*" *Tom.* 5, *part* 2, as an extract of a MS. belonging to the Abbé Perier, nephew of Pascal.

This paper, which, like the "Treatise on the Geometrical Spirit," was never entirely completed, follows that treatise in the small MS. 8vo., the text of which we have followed, inasmuch as it seems the most complete and correct.

"The Art of Persuasion," like the tract "On the Geometrical Spirit," proposes as its object to apply the processes of Geometricians to the art of general reasoning. There is, in fact, good ground for believing that this paper was a species of reproduction of the former, in an abridged and more didactic form. The authors of "The Port Royal Logic," although they do not expressly mention it by name, have evidently availed themselves of its contents in their chapter on "*La Méthode de Composition.*"

As regards the date of this fragment, we do not think it can have been that of his youth, or the period which may be denominated his first epoch: because,—It bears the marks of particular maturity; next, Pascal, after stating that there might be devised rules for pleasing, as well as for demonstrating, adds, that if any were capable of forming such rules, they were certain persons whom he was acquainted with; and that none possessed equal capability with them for the purpose. Now, here it is most probably Arnauld and Nicole who are designated; they were actually then engaged in the composition of "The Port Royal Logic;" and it cannot be doubted, that Pascal was in communication with them in the matter; and it was not till the year 1654, after the revival of his religious impressions, that Pascal connected himself with Port Royal. Lastly, at the close of the paper in question, Pascal refers to his having had large experience of *all* kinds of books, and of persons.

These several circumstances lead to the conjecture, that "The Art of Persuasion" was composed about the year 1657-8, between the period of the publication of the "Provincial Letters," and his latest writings. (*French Editor.*)



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Our Author here re-appears in the character of the teacher; one which, in fact, seems the best adapted to him. He assumes the professorial chair with innate ease, and delivers his instructions with an air of conscious authority.

Nothing can, indeed, be more appropriate, than that he whom his admiring Editor has happily styled "the most eloquent of men," should lay down rules for "Persuasion," and deliver his thoughts on "Eloquence and Style." But it ought also not to be forgotten, as has been stated by M. Villemain, in terms which it would be an injury to epitomize, that Pascal had, in a great measure, to form, out of bad taste and almost barbarism, the language in whose composition, when he came before the world as an author, he appeared at once so great a master. In this task, however, it is but justice to remember, that he was assisted by his eminent colleagues. These, it is well known, were men who, like himself, no less diligently cultivated the various branches of human taste and learning, than the arts of holy living, and of divine knowledge. And while, among these, Pascal was the acknowledged leader and head, the few specimens even contained in the present and a preceding volume—in which we find Le Maitre, Fontaine, and Nicole, with the devotedness of scholars to their teacher, engaged in clothing the ideas of Pascal in their own language—are sufficient to show, that they had attained to a proficiency in those graces of style, which, from that period, has not been surpassed.

This paper has never before been translated. If to some readers the treatise on "The Art of Persuasion" may seem somewhat systematic, they will find an agreeable variety in the collection of detached "Thoughts" which follow; and some of which have appeared in other publications. In these fragments are brought together, in rich profusion, and with a not unpleasing irregularity, the best rules for forming the taste in composition and discourse. We seem here to find unlocked, the choice secrets by which their author attained to his own unrivalled brilliancy and power; and the rules he has laid down must be, more or less, followed by all who would acquire any measure of taste or purity in the use of language.

(*Translator.*)

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ON THE

# ART OF PERSUASION, OR ELOQUENCE.

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THE art of persuasion, or Eloquence,* has a necessary relation to the manner in which man's assent is obtained to the propositions of a speaker, and to the matters presented by him to their convictions and judgment.

Every one knows, that there are two principal channels through which opinions find their entrance into the mind, —the understanding, and the will. That which would seem to be the most obvious of these is, the understanding; for we ought never to yield our assent to anything but demonstrated truths: yet the most common, although the one which is opposed to the proper order of things, is the will; for the larger number of men have their belief impelled, not so much by external proofs, as by their own inclinations. This latter method, however, is ignoble and unworthy; and is, therefore, disavowed by all. Every one professes to believe, and even to admire, only such things as are deserving of belief and admiration.

I am not here referring to truths of a religious nature;

* The former term, perhaps, more accurately expresses the meaning of the original; and, therefore, will be adhered to throughout the Treatise, although the latter (Eloquence) conveys a more comprehensive idea of the subject treated. (Transl.)

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I know the duty of excluding them from the subject-matters of the art of persuasion; for they are infinitely superior to them. It is by a Divine power alone, that those things find an entrance into the soul, and by such methods as God sees fit to employ. I know also, that it is his design that they shall be received into the understanding through the heart; and not into the heart through the understanding; and that this is intended to humble that pride of the reason, which is prone to set itself up as judge of things which are agreeable to the will; and to heal that infirmity of the will, which inclines us to indulge in unworthy * attachments. And thence it arises, that while, in human matters, we are accustomed to inculcate that "we must *know* before we can love,"—an expression which has become proverbial;† divine wisdom teaches, that, in regard to spiritual things, we must "*love* in order to know them;" and that we can attain to truth only through the medium of charity, or love. This forms one of the most impressive maxims of sacred instruction.

Hence it appears, that the Deity himself has established this rule, so greatly transcending man's reason, and so opposed to that which prevails in natural things. Men have, however, corrupted this rule, by treating secular matters in the same manner as they ought only to do those that are sacred. We, in reality, believe little but what falls in with our own tastes. Thence arises that general repugnance to receive the truths of the Christian religion, inasmuch as they are opposed to our natural inclinations.

"Tell us of pleasant things, and we will hearken,"

* "*Sales.*" Desmolets: "*indignes.*" † "*Ignoti nulla cupido.*"

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said the Jews to Moses; as if our pleasure should be the rule of our belief! It is to correct this irregularity of will, in a manner conformable to his own law, that God is seen never to shed his holy illuminations into the mind, till he has first subdued the rebellious tendencies of the will, by the sweet constraint and irresistible charm of celestial love.

It is of truths only of an inferior nature, then, that I am about to treat; and my proposition respecting these is, that the understanding and the affections are the two main portals by which they find admission into the mind of man; yet, that comparatively few enter it by the former, while multitudes crowd in by the caprices of the will, without the correctives of reason.

These two departments have each their respective principles, and their main-springs of action.

Those belonging to the understanding are natural, and universally recognized, truths,—such as that "a whole is more than a part;" as well as certain especial axioms, received by some and not by others, which yet, when once admitted into the mind, although they may be false in themselves, are as powerful in their sway over the belief as if they were true.

Those of the will, are the desires which are natural and common to all;—such as the desire of happiness, of which none are unconscious; together with various particular objects which every one affects for its attainment; and which, falling in with their own inclination, are as powerful over the will, (although, perhaps, most pernicious in their nature,) as if they were capable of constituting their truest happiness.

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Thus much, then, as regards those influences which exercise the strongest sway over man.

As to the instruments which we employ for the purposes of suasion, they are of various natures and qualities.

Some are necessarily derived from general principles and acknowledged truths. These can never fail of their effect; for, in demonstrating their relation with certain given principles, there is an infallible necessity of agreement; and they cannot but be received into the mind, as soon as it finds itself capable of incorporating them with those truths which have been already admitted.

There are some again, closely bound up with objects of personal enjoyment, and these also carry with them a certainty of conviction; for as soon as we are brought to perceive that the matter in question is connected with some object of supreme attachment, we embrace it with eagerness and delight.

But those which are doubly associated and bound up, both with recognized truths and our personal predilections, present themselves to the conviction with a force that nothing can exceed.

On the other hand, that which has no sympathy with our judgment or our tastes, appears to us alien, repulsive, and false.

Hitherto, the positions we have assumed leave no room for question. But there are cases, in which the things proposed to our judgment, while firmly based upon admitted truths, are, at the same time, repugnant to our most sensible enjoyments. These are greatly exposed to failure, from those causes (far too prevalent) which I assigned at the commencement; the unchastised spirit,

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proudly boasting that it follows only the dictates of reason, yields to the importunity of corrupt desires, in spite of all the resistance which a too-enlightened intelligence opposes to its rash career.

It is then, that the convictions of truth, and the instigations of sense, hold the man in suspense; then, the conclusions of the judgment on the one hand, and his impetuous desires on the other, wage within him a conflict, of which the issue must ever be uncertain: for, to conjecture of its result, we ought to know all that passes in the very interior of his spirit, of which the man himself is scarcely conscious.

From all this it follows, that in exerting our influence over others, we must have especial regard to their individual peculiarities, their mental constitution, and natural propensities,—the principles they acknowledge, and the objects in which they find satisfaction. And then it should be our aim, to conform and adjust the matters to be proposed to their judgment to these ascertained principles, and these favourite and cherished tastes.*

Thus we find, that the art of persuasion consists as much in conciliating the will, as in convincing the judgment; so much more are men swayed by inclination than by reason.

But of these two methods,—the one of convincing, and the other of pleasing,—I intend here only to lay down rules for the former; for it is that alone whose principles are fixed and definite: in fact, I know no art by which to regulate the caprices of the will.

* "*Les objets délicieux par les charmes qu'on lui donne.*" Desmolets: "*les objets censés délicieux par les charmes qu'on leur attribue.*"



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Yet the latter art,—that of pleasing,*—is, beyond comparison, more elaborate, more refined, more useful, and more interesting: the only reason why I do not attempt it is, that it is beyond my power. To do it justice, passes human skill; I believe it to be an impossibility.†

Not that there are not some rules for gaining over the inclination, as infallible as those for convincing the judgment; and any one perfectly skilled in them, would be as certain of success in carrying with him the favour of every class of persons,—not even excepting sovereigns themselves,—as of demonstrating the elements of Geometry, to those who have sufficient intelligence to receive the system. But I consider,—and it is perhaps a consciousness of my own incapacity that impresses me with the belief,—that it is impossible to attain to such a degree of skill. At least I know that if there are any persons who are capable of it, it is only *certain* individuals of my own acquaintance;‡ and that no others are to be found possessing such copious and distinguished qualifications as are required for the purpose.

The cause of this extreme difficulty is, that the sources of pleasure are not fixed and permanent. They differ in different men; and even, in the same individual, they are so variable, that there are no two persons to be found equally different from each other, as the *same* man will be from himself at successive periods. The pleasures of the man, also, differ from those of the female; those of

* "*La manière d'agréer.*" Desmolets: "*la méthode de plaire.*"

† Desmolets adds "*pour moi.*"

‡ It is probably his Port Royal friends, and associates in study, to whom he here refers. (Transl.)

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the rich from the poor: the tastes of the prince, of the warrior, of the merchant, the citizen, the peasant,—of the young, the old, the healthy, and the sick,—all differ; they are varied by the minutest accidents, and the most trivial circumstances.

There is, however, an art—and it is that now proposed to be unfolded—which exhibits the connexion of truths with their principles; as well those that convince the understanding, as those that please the taste, provided the principles once avowed be firmly and consistently maintained.

But as these principles are but few, and as, apart from Geometry, which deals only with very simple figures, there are scarcely any truths to be found upon which persons are entirely agreed, and still fewer objects of satisfaction respecting which our views are not incessantly changing, I do not know that any positive rules can be laid down for accommodating discourse to the incessant variations of caprice.

The art which I have entitled, "The Art of Persuasion," and which is properly only the process of perfect methodical proofs, consists of three main parts:—to define very clearly our terms; to propose either principles, or plain axioms, for proving the subject in discussion; and, in our demonstrations, mentally to substitute definitions for the thing defined.

The reason of this method is obvious. It would be useless to propose, and endeavour to demonstrate, anything sought to be established, without first clearly defining all the terms of the proposition, which would otherwise be unintelligible. In the same way, our demon-

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stration ought to be preceded by laying down its necessary and obvious principles; for, if the foundation be not well laid, the edifice cannot be secure. And, lastly, in our demonstrations, we must mentally substitute definitions for the things defined; for, otherwise, there might be a confusion of the different meanings of the terms employed. It is easy to see, that by adhering to this method we shall be certain of carrying conviction; for, the terms being clearly understood, and freed from all ambiguity, by means of the definitions, and the principles being conceded; if, in our demonstrations, we mentally substitute definitions in the place of the things defined, the desired conclusions must be attained with irresistible force.

In short, where these precautions have been observed, no demonstration can remain subject to the slightest doubt; where they have been neglected, none carry any measure of conviction.

It is of the first importance, then, well to comprehend and digest these things; and, for this purpose, I proceed to lay down in a small compass certain rules, which comprise all that is necessary to a complete series of definitions, axioms, and demonstrations; and, consequently, an entire system, on geometrical principles, of the "Art of Persuasion."

### *Rules for Definitions.*

I. Not to attempt to define any things that are in themselves so well understood, as that no terms can be made use of in explanation, which are clearer than themselves.

II. Not to pass over without definitions any obscure

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or equivocal terms, although they be such in only a slight degree.

III. In definitions, to use no expressions but such as are perfectly familiar, or such as have been already explained.

*Rules for Axioms.*

I. Not to omit any necessary principles, without ascertaining that they are conceded, however clear and evident they may be.

II. In axioms only to postulate things perfectly evident in themselves.

*Rules for Demonstrations.*

I. Not to attempt to demonstrate any things so evident in themselves, that nothing plainer can be brought forward to prove them.

II. To prove all propositions, however slightly obscure; and, for their proof, to use only very plain axioms, or propositions already conceded or proved.

III. Always to substitute, mentally, definitions for things defined; in order not to be misled by the equivocation of terms, which have been restricted by definitions.

These few rules contain all the directions required for producing solid and incontrovertible demonstrations. Among them, however, there are three which are not absolutely necessary, and may be omitted without ill consequences; while they are such, in their nature, as, although their observance tends to accuracy, it is difficult and almost impossible strictly to follow: they are the three first of the several divisions, viz.:—

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*For definitions.*—To define no terms that are perfectly understood.

*For axioms.*—Not to fail to require the concession of any axioms perfectly evident and simple.

*For demonstrations.*—Not to demonstrate any things that are quite self-evident.

For it is unquestionable, that it is no great error to define and explain very explicitly things which are clear in themselves, nor to omit to require the concession of axioms which cannot be refused, on occasions when it is necessary to do so; nor, finally, to demonstrate propositions which might be acceded to without proof.

But the five other rules are of absolute necessity, and cannot be neglected without positive defect and error. They constitute all that is requisite for conclusive, incontrovertible, and, so to say, geometrical demonstrations; while the addition of the others renders them yet more perfect.

I now proceed to the order in which the propositions in question should be disposed, to form a complete and geometrical series.

After having established * . . . . . .

. . . . . .

* The remainder of this paragraph is wanting; and none of this second part of Pascal's Treatise—whether for want of revision, or that it has been lost—is to be discovered in our manuscripts, or those of Desmolets. The latter has, indeed, very disingenuously omitted to specify, or rather has concealed, the hiatus that occurs in this place. For after transcribing the words, "I now proceed," &c., which imply a new subject, he omits the words, "after having established," and passes on to the subsequent passage, "It seems to me desirable," &c. Bossut, in publishing this fragment, after Desmolets, has equally omitted any mention of the deficient passages; but he has taken care to remove from the text the entire passage which forms the transition.

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This then constitutes the art of persuasion, which involves these two principles,—to define all the terms we make use of; and to demonstrate everything, by mentally substituting definitions in the place of the things defined.

And here it seems to me desirable to meet three principal objections, which may be alleged against the system.

One of these is, that the method is wanting in novelty: another, that it may be easily acquired without any knowledge of the elements of geometry, since it consists of a few particulars, which may be learned on a single reading: and the last, that it is of little utility, because its practice is almost confined to geometrical subjects.

It must be our business then to show, that there is, in reality, nothing with which persons are less acquainted; nothing more difficult to practise; and nothing of greater and more general utility.

As to the first objection,—that these rules are generally well known; that it is customary to define and demonstrate everything; and that logicians ever have laid down these principles among their precepts: I can only say I wish it were so, and that this method were so well known as to render it unnecessary for me to trace, with so much labour, the source of those defects of reasoning, which are almost universal. But so little is this the case, that with the sole exception of geometricians,—who form but a small number, are an isulated body, and make their appearance in every community only at distant intervals,—we find scarcely any persons who know

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anything of the matters in question.* It would be easy to make this apparent, to those who have been able entirely to understand the little that has been hitherto stated; those who have not understood it, on the other hand, I cannot expect to convince, in what I am now advancing.

But any who have entered into the spirit of these rules, and have got them fixed and rooted in the mind, will perceive how wide is the difference between what I have here laid down, and those positions which a few logicians have thrown out—accidentally perhaps, and in detached portions—in the course of their writings.

Persons accustomed to discriminate know the difference which may subsist between two synonymous words, according to the connexion and circumstances in which they are used. Would it be maintained that two persons who have both *read* a book, have an equal acquaintance with its contents,—when the one shall have acquired all its principles, followed its conclusions, rendered himself capable of refuting objections made to it, and mastered its entire system; while, to the other, it shall be a mere *dead letter;* and seeds of instruction, which, in a mind apt for their reception, might have produced a fruitful harvest, remain dry and unproductive in the barren understanding into which they have fallen?

It is not all who use the same language, that convey by it the same impressions; and this is why the admirable

* "*En si petit nombre qu'ils sont uniques en tout un peuple, et dans un long temps, on n'en voit aucun qui le sache aussi.*" Desmolets: "*En si petit nombre chez tous les peuples et en tous les temps, qui sont ceux uniquement qui le sachent, il sera aisé,*" &c.

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author of the "Art of Conference"* takes such pains to prove that we are not to judge of the capacity of a man by the excellence of any one happy remark.† Instead of extending our admiration of the speech to the person who utters it, we should scrutinize, he says, the quality of the mind whence it proceeds; we should see whether it seems an effort of memory, or springs from innate resources; and even treat it coolly, or even contemptuously, in order to see whether the speaker will resent our not appreciating his discourse by the measure of his own estimate: we shall, in that case, often find him at once disavow his sentiments, and he will be gradually drawn, from the meritorious opinions he had before expressed into others just as ignoble or absurd. We shall thus learn to probe the extent to which the thoughts in question are really those of the speaker;‡ how, whence, to what extent, he has become possessed of them: failing to do this, we shall certainly fall into rash and precipitate judgments.

Now I would inquire of any reasonable person, whether this principle, "*Matter is in its nature utterly incapable of thought;*" and this other, "*I think, therefore I exist;*" whether these bear in reality the same meaning, when propounded by Descartes, and by St. Augustin?—the latter of whom said the very same things twelve hundred years before.

I am, in truth, far from affirming that Descartes is not to be deemed the real author of the propositions in

* Montaigne. Essays, Book iii., ch. 8. † "*L'excellence d'un bon mot.*"

‡ Montaigne's expression is: "*Tâter de toutes parts comment elle est logée en son auteur.*" Essays, same chapter.

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question, even though he may first have met with them in the writings of that great and holy man; for I well know the difference between writing down a few words at a venture, without following them up by deep and extended views; and, on the other hand, perceiving in an expression a train of important consequences, which prove the distinction between the things which are spiritual and those which are material; and deducing from it a firm, consistent, and complete metaphysical principle,* as Descartes has aimed to do. For, without examining whether he has perfectly succeeded in this his attempt, I may for the purpose of the argument assume that he has done so; and, in this assumption, I maintain that the expressions are as different in his writings from those in the pages of others, who have merely allowed them to drop casually from their pen, as a body replete with life and vigour is from a corpse.

One man will throw out a sentiment without any apprehension of its force, while another will use the

* The reasoning of St. Augustin, here referred to by Pascal, is found in the 26th chap. of the 11th book of his "City of God." Augustin, guided by a kind of religious intuition, contemplates in man's nature the image of the Divine Trinity. "We possess," he says, "actually, first, Being; second, Consciousness of such being; third, Love of being, and of such consciousness. Presiding over the sensation, superior even to sentiment and imagination, we find a more certain and pure conviction of these truths."

Having laid down this triple affirmation, St. Augustin refutes their objections who allege, "But suppose you should be mistaken?" "If I am mistaken," I reply, "I still exist; for I cannot err, without existing." We see that in St. Augustin, as in Descartes, the very fact of "thought" is laid hold of, and forms the basis of the affirmation,—"I doubt; therefore, I exist." But, while Augustin deduces from it the reality of the threefold element which he discovers in man, Descartes infers from it the distinction of spiritual and material substances. Was Descartes acquainted with this passage of St. Augustin? It is probable that he was not. See on this subject the "Life of Descartes," by Baillet. 2d vol., p. 535.

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same expressions, but see in them such comprehensive results, that we shall positively affirm they are not the same. And this latter no more derives them from others, than a full-grown tree can be said to have its origin, from a person who has unconsciously cast the seed in the bosom of a fruitful soil.

The same thoughts will sometimes lead to entirely different results in other minds, from those of their original authors; they will remain barren in their native ground, and bear copiously when transplanted. But it more frequently happens, that a ready understanding produces from its own conceptions all the fruit which they are capable of bearing; and then others, finding them the object of admiration, deck themselves out in their borrowed honours, although unable to appreciate their real excellence. Then it is that the difference of the same sentiments, proceeding from different minds, is most sensibly perceived.

It is in this manner, perhaps, that logic has borrowed the rules of geometry, without apprehending their force; and thus, while they are committed to a common chance with those which properly belong to the science, it will not follow that they* have really entered into the spirit of geometry; and I should be very slow, on this slight evidence alone, to admit such persons into the same class with proficients in that science which teaches the only true method of regulating the reason.

On the contrary, I should be much disposed to exclude them from such rank, and that almost irrevocably. For, to take up hastily with these matters, without

* By "*they*" no doubt "logicians" are intended.

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evincing any care that everything requisite is included in them; and, instead of following these safe guides, to lose themselves in vain wanderings and useless researches, —fruitlessly looking for what can never be discovered,— is a clear proof of weakness; and that even more than if the things in question had not been perceived, and, consequently, had never been followed.

Truth is the aim of all. The logician pretends to be the guide to it; by the geometrician alone it is attained: and it is only by means of it, and of whatever partakes of its nature, that true demonstrations are to be found. The whole of the art is comprised in the few precepts which we have here laid down: they are sufficient and complete in themselves: all other rules are useless or injurious. This is the conclusion I have come to, after a long study of books, and knowledge of persons of all descriptions.

And I hold the same in regard to those who maintain that geometry furnishes no novelties in its rules. For although such persons may have possessed in reality those rules, they were mixed up with a multitude of others, either fallacious or valueless, between which they were incapable of making a discrimination; just as if a person, seeking a diamond of high worth amidst a number of false ones, should boast that he is in possession of the true one; equally with another, who, throwing aside the heap of rubbish, fixes upon the genuine stone, which he sees to be worth all the others together.

False reasoning is a malady admitting of those two modes of cure which have been described.

Another, however, has been devised, compounded of a

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multitude of inefficacious simples; among which, the few that are really good are overpowered and rendered inoperative, through the ill-qualities of the compound.

For the purpose of detecting the sophisms and equivocations of unsound reasoners, they have invented uncouth terms, which excite the wonder of their hearers; and, while we can only unravel the perplexities of a tangled web by drawing out one of the ends in the way that the geometricians direct, they indicate a multitude of others, in which the former are included, without knowing which of the number are the best.

And thus, while they point to us a variety of differing paths, which, as they allege, will conduct us to our destination,—although, in reality, there are but two such, —we must, for that reason, be especially careful in discriminating them.

It will be pretended by them, that geometry, which, assumes to be a correct guide, shows only those paths which were known before; because they had actually disclosed them, together with a multitude of others; and this, without perceiving that they had thus lost their value through over-abundance, and that excess in quantity occasioned a deterioration in quality.

There is no want of ingenious sentiments;* the difficulty lies in discrimination and selection: it is obvious that they are easily accessible, and known to every one. But few know how properly to distinguish in such matters. The defect is universal. Real excellence, of whatever kind, consists not in tumour and exaggeration.

* "*Rien n'est plus commun que les bonnes choses.*"

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The more evident is your effort, the more remote will you be from success: moderate your aim, and it will be attained. The best books are those which every reader thinks *he himself could have written.* Nature, which is the highest excellence, seems familiar and level to all.

I feel no doubt, therefore, that the rules in question are true; for they are simple, easy, and natural. It is not your "*Barbara*" and "*Baralipton*," * which will ever form a reasoner. The mind cannot be forced into elevation. A constrained and artificial training fills it with vain presumption and a ridiculous inflation, instead of solid and healthy nutriment. And one of the chief hindrances, at the outset, to the finding the true path of knowledge, is the shallow fancy that intellectual felicities are so difficult of attainment; and the giving them such names as "*great, illustrious, elevated, sublime!*" It is here that lies all the mischief. I say, rather let them be called "*easy, common, familiar:*" these are far better names. For my part, I detest such stilted terms!

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As to the illustrations which we employ to prove our statements, if we would again prove the illustrations themselves, we ought to take the original statements as illustrations; for, as we consider our difficulty to lie in that which we have to prove, we find the illustrations serviceable in elucidating it. Thus, when we wish to demonstrate some general point, we must give the parti-

* These terms, and others not less uncouth, were in use among the old logicians, to designate certain figures and modes of syllogism. They are still to be seen in the "Port Royal Logic." See 3d part, ch. 8.

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cular rule of a given case. But if we would prove a particular case, then we must begin with the *particular* rule.* For it must be supposed, that what we want to illustrate has some obscurity, and the illustration itself possesses more clearness. When we set ourselves, therefore, to explain any statement, we must be under an impression that it has in it some difficulty; and, on the contrary, that the topics we use for illustration, are of an explanatory nature; and thus we easily make ourselves understood.

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We most usually arrive sooner at conviction by means of reasons which we ourselves discover, than by those suggested to us by others.†

* Here, no doubt, Pascal intended to say *general*. It should be noticed that these parts, which are free from erasures, are among those which, in the autograph MS., bear marks of extreme haste.

† This, and the preceding paragraphs, do not in the original form part of the "Art of Persuasion;" but they seemed to me to form a suitable sequel to the Tract.

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# THOUGHTS ON

# ELOQUENCE AND STYLE.



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# EDITORIAL NOTICES.

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We have here placed, under a separate section, the too brief fragments which Pascal left behind him, respecting an art of which he had laid open every secret; for, whether he spoke or wrote, he was the MOST ELOQUENT OF MEN.

With the exception of a small number, these "Thoughts on Eloquence and Style" have been already published; but in the old editions they are scattered without order, and under various titles. To this an exception should be made of the Dijon edition, (1835,) in which, for the most part, they are collected under one head. (*French Editor.*)

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A CONSIDERABLE portion of these reflections have appeared in this country, in former editions of the "*Pensées,*" but have never been heretofore arranged in any methodical order. Many, however, besides those from MSS., are now translated for the first time.

From this part of the volume, the reader will be pleased especially to notice, that all *the paragraphs, or parts of paragraphs, titles, &c.*, having this mark + prefixed, are published in the French work from which this translation is made, for the *first* time from the original MSS.

(*Translator.*)



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THOUGHTS ON

# ELOQUENCE AND STYLE.

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## I. + *Eloquence.*

We require from a speaker both agreeableness and truth; but that which aims to be agreeable, must be based upon truth.

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II. + Eloquence, too long continued, is wearisome.

— Princes and kings must sometimes unbend. To be ever on their thrones would be insufferable; greatness needs occasional relaxation from its dignities, that they may be the better appreciated.

— + Too much continuity displeases in all things. Cold is agreeable, and makes us enjoy warmth.

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III. Eloquence is a portraiture of the thought; those, therefore, who overload with colour, produce a painting indeed, but not a portrait.

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IV. Eloquence is the art of expressing things in such a manner, that,—first, the persons addressed shall listen not only without uneasiness, but with satisfaction; and, secondly, they shall feel an interest in the subjects

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discussed, and shall accompany them with beneficial reflections.

It consists, then, in a correspondence aimed at, on the one hand, between the mind of the writer or speaker, and the feelings of those addressed; and, on the other, between the thoughts as they arise in the mind, and the language which is made their vehicle; all which supposes a profound study of the heart of man, to acquire a knowledge of its most secret springs, and to draw out the desired emotions by appropriate language. We ought to put ourselves in the place of those whom we address, and to make trial upon our own heart of any touching or forcible turn of discourse; in order to ascertain whether the one is calculated to affect the other; and thus be assured, of carrying with us the sympathies of the hearer. We ought, as much as possible, to study simplicity and nature; and to give no undue elevation to what is, in itself, low, nor to lower what is great. It is not enough that a thought or an illustration be intrinsically beautiful; it must be appropriate to our subject, in which nothing ought to be excessive, and nothing deficient.*

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V. In every conversation, or discourse, we ought to be able to answer, if objection be taken, "What is it you complain of?"

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VI. There are some who speak well, but write indifferently. The reason is, that occasion and circumstances

* This definition of eloquence is undoubtedly worthy of the author of the "Provincials," and bears with it its own evidences of authenticity. But it is not found in the MS. nor the copies; Bossut first published it, without stating whence it was derived.

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produce an excitement, and draw from the mind more than would be elicited without such assistances.*

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VII. † *Miscellan.—Language.*

Those who use antitheses to give effect to words, are like builders that put false windows in their houses, for the sake of symmetry.

Their rule is, not to speak accurately, but to produce exact figures.

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VIII. † *Language.*

We must not turn our minds aside from their purpose, except for relaxation, and then only on suitable occasions: you may trifle when necessary, but not otherwise; if unseasonably, you will cause weariness. Whoever descends to trifling at unfitting times, will produce dissatisfaction; for such is the capriciousness of the fancy, that our feelings are apt to recoil upon themselves, and take the very opposite to the desired course, when we cease to experience pleasure: this latter is the coin for which we yield all that is asked of us.

---

IX. When we meet with a really natural style of composition, we are surprised and delighted; we looked for an *author*, and we find a *man*. On the other hand, persons of good taste, expecting in a book to find a man, are often surprised to meet with only an author: "*plus poetice quam humane locutus es.*" Those do real honour

* Montaigne, Book ii., chap. 17. . . . "I owe it to accident that I can talk more effectively than I write; movement and action give animation to speech."

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to nature, who show that *she* can treat of all subjects, not even excepting *Theology*.

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X. If the lightning had fallen upon a low country, &c., poets, and others who can only reason upon things of that nature, would have failed of their illustrations.

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XI. We put a mask on nature, and disguise her. We must not talk of a king, a pope, a bishop, but an "august Monarch," &c.;—not of Paris, but of "the capital of the realm."

There are some occasions when we should call Paris, Paris; others, on the contrary, when it may be called "the capital of the realm."

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XII. When we meet with repetitions of words in a composition, and, on endeavouring to correct them, we find their removal would impair the effect, we should leave them: to do otherwise shows a blind fastidiousness which is unable to perceive that, in such a case, a repetition is no defect; this is one of those points, however, which admit of no general rule.*

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XIII. The meaning of a passage will be changed by the words made use of in its expression. Meanings receive from, rather than impart to words their force. To find examples of this . . . . . .

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* On the reverse of the paper on which this remark is written, are the following lines struck through:— "When I was a child, I locked up my book; and because it sometimes happened that I deceived myself in thinking I had locked it up, I became distrustful of myself. . . . ."

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XIV. The last thing we do in composing a work, is to determine upon the mode of its commencement.

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XV. Those accustomed to judge by feeling, understand little of reasoning; they decide by a glance, and are not able to search into principles. Others, on the contrary, who are in the habit of reasoning from principles, cannot enter into matters of feeling; principles are all they look for, and they can do nothing by mere sight.

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XVI. When we are acquainted with a person's ruling passion, we are sure to be able to please him; and yet every one has some fancies opposed to his real welfare, which he supposes contribute to it; this is a capriciousness which throws us off our scent.

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XVII. When a description true to nature is given of a passion, or an incident, we feel an internal conviction of its fidelity, although we had before been unconscious of it; and thus experience a feeling of complacency towards the narrator. For he does not so much describe what is in himself, as what is reflected in our own minds, and this gives us satisfaction; besides that the sympathy thus formed between us and him inclines us the more to good-will towards him.

---

XVIII. + It is not in *Montagne*,* but in *myself*, that I see everything I find in him.

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* We here retain Pascal's orthography: he always writes *Montagne*, instead of *Montaigne*.



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## XIX. † *Montagne.*

Montagne's defects are great. Lasciviousness,—a vile quality, in spite of *Mademoiselle de Gournay*. Credulity,—"*people without eyes;*" ignorance,—"*quadrature of the circle,* a *larger world.*" His sentiments on voluntary homicide and death; he induces an indifference respecting our salvation; "*without fear, and without repentance.*" As his work does not profess to be religious, he is not bound to inculcate piety; but none are absolved from the obligation not to deter from its observances. We might excuse his free and voluptuous sentiments, under some circumstances of life;* but we cannot excuse his heathenish views of death; for we must renounce every feeling of religion, not to desire to die as a Christian: while his aim throughout his whole book is to teach men how to hold life loosely, and quit it with ease.

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XX. What is good in Montagne must have been of difficult acquirement. What is bad (I mean apart from his morals) might have been corrected with ease; he should have had a hint that he tells too many stories, and talks too much of himself.

---

XXI. When we cannot attain to truth, it is as well that there should be extant some common and prevalent error, which gives a degree of stability to the mind; such as attributing changes of season, the progress of diseases, &c., to the moon. For the chief evil of man is a restless curiosity into things, of which he cannot

* In the margin are written, Nos. 730 and 231, which no doubt refer to the pages in Pascal's edition of the "Essays."

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acquire a knowledge; and error is less injurious than this fruitless curiosity.

+ The mode of writing most usual with Epictetus, Montagne, and Salomon de Tultie,* is that which impresses the most, dwells longest in the memory, and is most apt for quotation; inasmuch as it consists of thoughts thrown out from the ordinary occurrences of life. Thus, when reference is made to the vulgar error—that the moon has an effect upon everything, we are always reminded of Salomon de Tultie's remark,—"When truth cannot be discovered, it is well that there should be some universal error," &c.; which is the thought adduced above.

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## XXII. + *Martial's Epigrams.*

Man is prone to malignity; yet it is not directed against the unhappy, but against the proud and happy: to suppose the contrary is a mistake.

+ For concupiscence is the source of all our agitations; and humanity . . . . . .

— + We should endeavour to please persons of humane and tender dispositions.

— That† on "the two one-eyed persons" is good for nothing; it affords them no consolation, and is only a vain conceit of the author. Whatever exhibits only an author's skill is worthless. "*Ambitiosa recidet ornamenta.*" ‡

---

* Our own inquiries, and those of several learned persons, have not been successful in conjecturing who is meant by Salomon de Tultie. It is most likely that Madame Perier, in whose hand-writing this passage is found in the MS., must have made a mistake in the name.

† The Epigram.

‡ Horace; "Art of Poetry."

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XXIII. All the false beauties that we censure in Cicero find numerous admirers.

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XXIV. † The same words, differently arranged, will convey a different meaning; and meanings differently arranged, produce different results.

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XXV. Let no one say, I have said nothing new: the arrangement of the materials is new. When two persons are playing at tennis, they use the same ball; but one strikes it better than the other.

In the same way, I should wish always to be told that I make use of common words; and, if the same thoughts have not formed altogether another subject by a different arrangement, the same words will have formed other thoughts by their different disposition.

---

XXVI. Some authors, speaking of their works, say "*my* book, *my* commentary, *my* history," &c. They are like ill-bred persons who have just got a house of their own, and are always talking of "*my house.*" They would do better to say "our book, our commentary, our history," &c.; for there is usually more that belongs to others in them than to themselves.*

---

XXVII. Languages are a species of cipher, in which it is not letters that are changed into letters, but words into words; so that an unknown tongue is decypherable.

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XXVIII. There is a kind of standard of agreeable-

* This passage, which is highly characteristic of Pascal, is not found either in the MS. or the copies, or any other MSS. that have been consulted. It was published first by Bossut, but without stating where it had been found.

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ness and beauty, which consists in a certain relation between our natural dispositions, whether it be feeble or strong, and that which gives us pleasure.

Whatever conforms to this standard pleases; be it a residence, music, discourse, poetry, prose, females, birds, rivers, trees, chambers, dress, &c.

Whatever is not adapted to this model displeases those who have a susceptibility of taste.

† And as there is a perfect relation between a piece of music and a house formed upon a good model, because they resemble such model, although each in its respective fashion; so there is a perfect relation between things formed upon a bad model. Not that there is only one bad model; for there are in reality an infinite number. But take the case of a sonnet; and you will find it, when composed upon a bad model whatever it be, like a female dressed in this kind of ill taste.

† Nothing shows more plainly the absurdity of this vicious kind of poetry, than to contrast it with the simplicity of nature, and then suppose a female dressed, or a house constructed, after such a fashion.

---

## XXIX. † *Poetical Beauty.*

If we are to have a poetical beauty, we ought also to have a geometrical beauty, and a medicinal beauty. Yet we do not speak thus; and the reason is, that we well know the object of geometry,—that it is to work out demonstrations; and the object of medicine,—that it is the healing of sickness; but we do not know in what consists that satisfaction which is the object of poetry. We do not know what is the model in nature which it seeks to imitate; and, for want of that knowledge, certain

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affected phrases have been invented, such as "golden age," "miracle of the day," "fatality," &c.; and this jargon is called poetical beauty!

But carry your thoughts to the case of a female dressed after such a fashion as this,—this endeavour to express petty sentiments with tumid words,—and you will imagine a beauty decked out with beads, chains, and other tawdry ornaments. You would laugh, for you know what constitutes the real grace of women, better than you understand the pleasure aimed at by versification: but those who do not know this would be filled with admiration at all this finery; and there are many country places where such a damsel would be taken for a queen! Thus it is that we should call poems composed after this fashion, *village queens*.*

---

XXX. † I have never been able to form, after an interval, exactly the same judgment respecting the same things. I cannot judge of a work that I am engaged in, while composing it: I must, like the painters, look at it from a distance, but not too great a one. How great should it be, then? Consider.

---

XXXI. Those who judge of a work without being possessed of rules, are, in reference to others, like persons comparing time with their watches.† One says, "We have been two hours;" another, "We have been only

* These remarks upon poetical beauty have been often made the subject of attack, and especially by Dacier, in the preface to the translation of Horace. But it has been overlooked, that Pascal does not here ridicule true poetry, but the paltry versification of the madregal-makers of his time.

† We have given the literal text from the autograph, but the sense evidently requires that it should be "*without* watches."

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three-quarters of an hour." I look at my watch; I say to the one, "You are tired," and to the other, "Time passes quickly with you, for you have been an hour and a half." Thus I laugh at those who say time passes heavily with me, and that I judge by mere guess: they do not know that I decide by my watch.

---

XXXII. We do not get credit among people in general for a knowledge of versification, unless we bear about with us the air of the poet: and the same is the case with mathematicians, &c. Persons of genius, however, carry no such external indications; but exhibit no difference between the occupation of the poet, and that of the embroiderer.

Persons of genius are not called poets, geometricians, &c.; but they *are* all these, and know how to judge of all these things. You do not at first find them out. When they join you, they slide into the passing topics of conversation. You perceive in them no distinctive feature of mind, except when occasion arises to call it into exercise; then, however, they make themselves *felt.* It is the characteristic of such persons, that you never remark anything peculiar in their conversation, when the subjects are not of a literary nature; but when they are such, then you perceive their superiority.

It is, therefore, an ill compliment to say of a man on his coming into company, that he exhibits the poet; and it is equally so, if you only appeal to such a person, when the question turns upon the merits of a few verses.*

---

* "*Et c'est une mauvaise marque, quand on n'a pas recours à un homme, quand il s'agit de juger de quelques vers.*" The rendering here given to

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XXXIII. † I prefer not to say of any one, he is a mathematician, or a preacher, or an eloquent man; but that he is "*honnête homme.*"* This is a universal designation, and is the only one that pleases me. It is a bad thing when you only think of a man's book, on first seeing him; and I would rather that nothing remarkable were perceived in him, except when a proper occasion should occur for its display. "*Ne quid nimis:*" let no one quality predominate, and give you, as it were, its *nick-name.*† Think nothing about talking well, except when it is proper to be eloquent; and then think as much as you please about it.‡

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(The following seem to be mere rough fragments or memoranda of passing thoughts, critical and otherwise, jotted down in his habitual manner.)

XXXIV. † *To conjecture.*—The interest I feel in your dissatisfaction.

† M. the Cardinal did not wish to be guessed at.

— † "My mind is full of disquiet." "I *am full* of disquiet" would be better.

this clause, requires the insertion of the limiting particle *que* before the *quand;* and as this seems the obvious meaning of the passage, the word in question must, I think, have been omitted in the MS. (Transl.)

* "*Honnête homme.*" I need scarcely remark upon the obvious difficulty of properly rendering by any English epithet this idiomatic phrase. The antithesis intended in *honnête,* is to the mathematician, preacher, &c. A *good* man does not supply it adequately; and a *clever* man does not meet the meaning of the original. I must, therefore, leave the difficulty unsolved. (Transl.)

† "*Ne fasse baptiser.*"

‡ This and the preceding paragraph are, in the MS., in a very bad handwriting.

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— † Eloquence which persuades by gentleness, not by authority. As a tyrant, not a king.

XXXV. † A predominant talent, which regulates all the rest.

XXXVI. † "*To extinguish the flame of sedition.*" —Too flowery.

† "*The restlessness of his genius:*" two high-sounding words: rather excessive.*

† *Miscell.*

XXXVII. † Mannerism: I was desirous of applying myself to this.

XXXVIII. † The doctor, who talks a quarter of an hour after he has said all he had to say, through mere love of hearing his own voice.

† The Paroquet wipes his beak, although it is clean.

XXXIX. † "*Comminutum cor:*" St. Paul. This is the character of a Christian.

— † "*Albe vous a nommé: je ne vous connais plus.*"— Corneille.†

An inhuman trait. Humanity is the opposite of this.

XL. † *Pyrrhonien;* an opinionated person.

— † No one calls himself a *courtier,* but he that is *not* one; so of a servant, a provincial, &c.; and I would

* These, and several of the preceding half-formed passages, seem to be rough memoranda, intended to be formed into illustrations of the rules of taste in composition which had preceded. (Transl.)

† Tragedy of Horatii. Act ii., sc. 3.

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lay a wager that it is the printer who has given that title to the "*Lettres au Provincial.*"*

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XLI. † Carriage, "*versé*" or "*renversé*," according to the intention.

—† "*Répandre*" or "*verser*," according to the intention.

XLII. † *Symmetry.*

† It is what is perceived at a glance.

† Its principle, that it cannot be otherwise without deformity.

† Founded also on the human figure; whence it is that we see symmetry only in size, not in height nor depth.

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XLIII. † See remarks in II., IV. and V. of the "Jansenist:" they are serious and elevated. (Struck through in the MS.)

— † I equally dislike a buffoon and an inflated person.

— † We can make no friend of either one or the other.

— † They consult only the ear, because they have no heart.

— † The rule is, integrity.

— † Poet, and not "*honnête homme.*"

— † After my 8th,† I considered I had replied sufficiently. (Struck through.)

— † Beauty of omission, of judgment.

---

— † These persons want heart.

— † We can make no friends of them.

* This note of Pascal gives us the proper title of the "Provincials," which was "*Lettres* au (not *à un*) *Provincial.*"

† Allusion to the 8th Provincial, exposing the corrupt maxims of the Casuists, respecting judges, usurers, the Mohatra contract, &c. (Transl.)

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# MISCELLANEOUS THOUGHTS.

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# EDITORIAL NOTICES.

We have here collected, under the title of "Miscellaneous Thoughts," all the fragments, which, on the one hand, were too unconnected to be formed into distinct sections; and, on the other, could not be appended to any of the articles contained in the present volume, nor find an appropriate place in the "Apology for Christianity."

It is possible that some of these thoughts may have had a measure of connexion in the train of Pascal's reflections with his projected great work; but the larger number were, doubtless, the accidental fruit of the working of his powerful mind, to which all passing subjects afforded food for meditation.

We have not aimed to arrange them in a very methodical sequence; and only when certain of their number seemed to bear an obvious analogy to each other, have taken any pains to classify them at all.

When two paragraphs are separated by a line, it is implied that in the autograph MS. they are written upon two separate papers; and, on the contrary, those not so separated are on the same paper in the MS. The cyphers in Roman character, at the head of each of the Thoughts, are only intended to facilitate reference. (*French Editor.*)

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A large proportion of these Miscellanies have appeared before, but scattered up and down among other sections of Pascal's writings, in which their place was not appropriate; and some (exclusive of those designated as from MS.) are altogether new. It will be obvious how valuable an addition is made to the collection, by the large number marked as now

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first collected and published from original sources. As a whole, indeed, these fragmentary and fugitive writings furnish a code of important instruction upon a vast multitude of subjects; and, to some, perhaps, their unconnected form will present more attraction, than essays, better digested, and more consecutive in their arrangement. It must be considered singularly fortunate, considering how little, comparatively, of more sustained and revised composition the shortness of his life, and his infirmity of health, permitted him to accomplish, that Pascal should have possessed so fixed a habit, of committing his passing reflections and elementary thoughts to writing; by means of which, much that, in the case of other men is lost, and forgotten, has been preserved for the benefit of posterity.

(*Translator.*)

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# MISCELLANEOUS THOUGHTS.

I. † M. DE ROANNEZ once remarked: — "Reasons occur to me afterwards; but, in the first instance, one thing pleases or displeases me, without my being conscious of the reason; and another displeases me, for a reason which I do not discover till afterwards." I believe, however, not that the displeasure is felt for the reasons which occur to us afterwards, but that the reasons are discovered, only because the displeasure has been felt.*

II. † When passion urges to an action, we are forgetful of duty. Our inclinations lead us, for instance, to read a certain book, and we read it, when we ought to be otherwise employed. Now, to correct this, we should purpose to ourselves to do something we dislike; and then we shall excuse ourselves, on the ground that we have something else to do; by this means we shall recall ourselves to our duty.

III. † The most irrational things in worldly affairs

* Second MS. Collection of P. Guerrier, p. 192.

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often become, through the evil tendencies of man, the most reasonable. What is there less reasonable, than to choose for the governor of a kingdom, the eldest son of a sovereign? We do not select for captain of a ship, the sailor of highest birth; such a rule would be improvident and ridiculous. But, because the nature of things is, and will ever remain such, it becomes reasonable and just; for who should be selected? The most virtuous, the ablest? Here we are at once at issue; every one pretends to be the most virtuous, and the most able. Let us then, we say, attach the pre-eminence to something that admits of no dispute. It must be the *eldest* son of the sovereign. There, our course is clear; there can be no contest upon that point. Reason can devise nothing better; for civil wars are the greatest of all evils.*

---

IV. The power of sovereigns is founded both on the reason, and on the folly, of their people; but much the most on their folly. The greatest and most important things in the world are based in weakness; and this basis is admirably secure; for nothing is more certain than this, that the people will ever be weak. That foundation

* MSS. of *Biblioth. Roy.*, portfolios of Dr. Vallant. Nicole, in his work on the "Education of a Prince," has given, with some modification, part of these sentiments of Pascal, which, however, in their present state, are now published for the first time. The ordinary editions of the "*Pensées*" give only these lines:—"We do not choose for captain of a ship, that one among the sailors who is of the highest birth." This remark, which in former editions has been appended to a passage with which it has no connexion, appears again in the MS., written in Pascal's hand, in the form of an isolated note.

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which consists in the soundness of their reason, and an opinion of their wisdom, is an unstable one.

---

V. † *Some opinions of the people are sound.*

The greatest of calamities is civil war. It is sure to befall, if an attempt is made to elevate merit only; for all will say they are deserving. The evil to be apprehended from a fool who succeeds by right of birth, is not so great, or so certain.

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VI. † *Sound opinions of the people.*

For a man to be handsomely dressed, is not a mere vanity; for it proves that a number of persons are employed for him: he shows by his well-arranged hair, that he has a *valet de chambre*, a perfumer, &c., to attend him; his band shows the fineness of his linen, lace, &c.

Nor is it a mere matter of outside show and trapping, to carry various coats of arms.

† Numerous emblazonments are the indications of bravery. Thus a handsome appearance is a proof of superiority.

---

VII. The people have some very sound opinions; for example:—

1st. To prefer amusements and the chase to imaginative reading. Half-instructed persons ridicule this, and pique themselves on proving from it the folly of the world; but, for a reason which they cannot discern, the preference is right.



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2d. To pay distinction to men on external grounds, —such as nobility and wealth. The world affects triumphantly to prove the unreasonableness of this; but it is actually highly reasonable.*

+ 3d. To be offended at a blow; or to be greatly desirous of glory.

+ Yet is all this very reasonable, on account of the other advantages connected with it; and a man who has received a blow, without showing his sense of it, is overwhelmed with injuries and impositions.†

+ 4th. To labour for uncertainties;—to walk upon the sea;—and to traverse a plank.

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VIII. Man is necessarily so much of a fool, that it would be a species of folly not to be a fool.

---

IX. + The world judges many things; for it is the ignorance of its natural state that forms the true tribunal of man.

* To this passage has been appended, by Pascal, the following note:— "Savages ridicule the idea of an infant king." This has been evidently taken from a passage in "Montaigne's Essays," in which he relates, that three inhabitants of the New World, whom he calls "Cannibals," came in his time to Rouen, and had a long interview with Charles IX., then an infant. Some one asking them, what they had thought the most remarkable of all they saw at Rouen, they said,—"In the first place, they thought it very strange that so many great men, bearded, strong, and well armed, should be standing round the king, (they probably meant the Swiss Guard,) taking orders from an infant; and did not rather choose one of themselves for their sovereign." Essays, Book i., chap. 30.

† It is very obvious, that in these passages Pascal is foregoing his habitual character of the Christian moralist; and, assuming the principles current in the world, lays down rules of conduct consistent with them. (Transl.)

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Knowledge has two extremes which meet; the one is that pure natural ignorance, in which all are born; the other is that which is experienced by minds of the highest order. After traversing the whole circle of human attainments, they find that they know *nothing;* and end in the same ignorance in which they set out. But it is the ignorance of *learning* only, that knows itself to be ignorant. Those who occupy an intermediate place, —who have just emerged from their natural ignorance, and yet not attained to that of learning,—possess a sort of smattering of knowledge, and are looked upon as clever. These are the people that keep the world in commotion, and blunder in everything. They, and the common people, constitute the great bulk of mankind. They despise the latter, and are despised by them in their turn. They are erroneous in their judgments of everything, and *the world is right in its judgment* of them.

(On the reverse leaf of this last fragment, is written the following passage on Descartes' system of the world.)*

## IX. *Descartes.*

We are then, in substance, to say, that is produced by figure and motion; and that is true. But to say these things, (*quels*) and then compose the machine, is absurd; for it is useless, uncertain, and painful. And even were it

* Although this remark of Pascal may seem to be directed against the entire philosophy of Descartes, it is evident that it is specially suggested by the 3d Part of the "*Principia Philosophiæ*," entitled "*de Mundo adspectabili.*" At page 415 of the MS. Autog., there are these detached expressions:—"Descartes, unprofitable and variable."



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true, we hold that all the philosophy in the world does not avail against an hour of suffering.*

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X. The habit of seeing sovereigns surrounded by guards, music, officers of state, and all those things which mechanically challenge respect and fear, inspires their subjects with reverence and dread, even when they are seen alone, and without these accompaniments; because our thoughts naturally connect these customary appendages with their persons. And the world, not knowing that this is the mere effect of custom, supposes that it originates in some inherent force possessed by them; whence comes the expression,—"There is divinity stamped upon the countenance," &c.

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XI. The bonds which preserve distinction and respect between men, are necessary: there must be degrees of rank in society;—all being desirous of pre-eminence, all not being able to enjoy it, and yet some succeeding in obtaining it.

* We must be permitted a few remarks upon this passage, on account of the contradictory comments of which it has been the subject:—

1st. No one before ourselves had any knowledge of it, but through the *two copies*. We discovered it in the autograph MS., in clearing away part of the sheet of very thick paper with which it was covered, and which concealed it entirely from view.

2d. It is written very hastily, and bears the appearance of a mere rough note; it is afterwards erased, not subsequently and by another hand, but evidently by the hand and pen of Pascal.

3d. The two copies, which are both alike, agree also with the MS., excepting the word "*quelle*," which in the copies is erroneously substituted for "*quels*," &c. (French Editor.)

More phlegmatic natures might almost envy the pleasure which M. Faugère must have felt in the discovery of these unknown passages, and the zeal with which he defends his priority of acquisition. (Transl.)

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+ Let us carry our thoughts back to the first formation of these bonds. Men would doubtless fight, till the stronger prevailed over the weak; and then one party would gain the ascendency. But when that was once settled, the rulers, desiring that wars should cease, would ordain that the power they had themselves acquired, should devolve to others according to men's pleasure; some would remit it to popular election, some to hereditary succession, &c.

+ Then it is that imagination begins her part: hitherto force had done all; now force is aided in a measure by fancy;—in France it is aristocracy, in Switzerland the burgesses, &c.

These bonds, then, which maintain distinction towards one and another, are, in reality, those of the imagination.

XII. + The mighty efforts which the human mind sometimes puts forth, are not usually long sustained. It reaches the unwonted elevation, but holds it only for a moment; it does not maintain it, as a throne, for ever.*

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XIII. Man is neither an angel nor a beast: and the misfortune is, that those who seek to become angels become beasts.†

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* Montaigne, Book ii., beginning of ch. 29.—"We sometimes feel our minds roused by the discourse or example of others far beyond their ordinary pitch."

† Pascal says elsewhere of man,—"He is neither angel nor beast, but man," MS., p. 120. Montaigne also has remarked, "They wish to get from among men, and escape from humanity. It is a folly: instead of transforming themselves into angels, they become beasts." Essays, Book iii., last chap.

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XIV. † When good qualities are carried to an extreme, there are, on either side, almost an endless number of evil ones which insinuate themselves insensibly; and there are others, which crowd our way in multitudes; so that we lose ourselves in the evil qualities, and the virtues wholly disappear.

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XV. How proper is it that men should hold their distinctions by external, rather than internal qualifications! Which of us is to take precedence of the other? Who is to yield his place? The least clever? I am as clever as he. Then we must fight for it. He has four lackeys, and I have but one; that is obvious to all; you have but to count them. Then it is for me to yield, and I am a fool to contest the point. Thus we keep the peace towards each other; and that is one of the greatest of all blessings.*

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XVI. There is this great advantage in rank, that it puts a man forward in society, and affords him opportunities of acquiring knowledge and consideration, from the age of eighteen or twenty; all which other men can scarcely attain before they are fifty: it is thirty years gained, without trouble.

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XVII. External ceremony consists in this,—to put ourselves to inconvenience for others. This appears a vanity, but it is, in reality, a thing well founded; it is as

* This passage, which has been published from the first as Pascal's, is not found in the autograph MS., or the two copies, although it is universally believed to be his. At page 79 of the MS. only is found this isolated note, . . . . "he has four lackeys."

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much as to say, "I would willingly inconvenience myself, if it were necessary, for you; since I do so when it can do you no service. Besides this, deference is the mark by which we distinguish the great. Now if our consideration were to cost us no trouble, we should yield it to every one alike; and then there would be no distinctions in society: but by putting ourselves out of our way for such things, we mark these distinctions.*

XVIII. The Swiss dislike the term gentry; and confer their high offices upon persons of the lowest birth.

XIX. † See the power of a fly.† It gains battles; impedes the activity of the mind; devours our bodies!

XX. Cromwell was overrunning all Christendom: the royal family would have been destroyed, and his own permanently established, but for a grain of sand in his interior. Rome herself was trembling before him. But *there* was the little stone: he dies; his family sinks; peace is restored, and the king re-established!

XXI. Strange perversity of judgment! There is not a person in the world who does not prefer himself, and his own happiness, and the preservation of his happiness, and of his life, to that of all the whole world besides.

* In another part of the MS. there are these words, detached,—"Vanity, respects, signify to put ourselves to inconvenience."

† Allusion is here made to a fact related by Montaigne in his Essays, Book ii., ch. 12. He says, "the Portuguese, besieging the town of Tamby, were obliged to raise the siege on account of a swarm of flies that harassed them."

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XXII. † There are two sorts of persons who confound the distinctions between things, such as between festivals and working-days, Christians and priests, various kinds of sins, &c. Thence, the one sort conclude that what is wrong in ecclesiastics is equally so in ordinary Christians; and the other, that what is not wrong in Christians in general is allowable in ecclesiastics.

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XXIII. The highest order of minds are most capable of perceiving originality of character. Ordinary ones see little difference between one person and another.

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XXIV. † *Yours, mine.*

"This dog is *mine*," you hear poor children say: "That is *my* place in the sunshine:" there is the commencement and type of usurpation throughout the world.

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XXV. It is curious to observe, that there are people who will renounce every law of God and nature, and yet will make laws for themselves, to which they pay implicit obedience: as, for instance, the brigands of Mahomet, robbers, heretics, &c.; aye, and logicians also. † One might suppose that the license of such persons would be unbounded, seeing they have freed themselves from such just and salutary restraints.*

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XXVI. When it is debated whether we ought to make war, and destroy such a number of men,—thus

* This is in Madame Perier's hand-writing.

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condemning so many Spaniards to death,—it is one individual only that constitutes himself judge, and he an interested one: there ought to be a third, and a disinterested party.*

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XXVII. Inequality of condition among men is necessary. True: but, granting this, see how you open the door not only to supremacy of sway, but also to the highest degree of tyranny!

The mind requires occasional relaxation; but that opens, again, the door to the greatest excesses.

We must endeavour ourselves to put due limits to these things. In themselves there are none: law endeavours to fix such limits, but the mind will not endure them.

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XXVIII. The great and the humble experience the same accidents, the same disquiets, the same passions; but the one are at the top of the wheel, and the other near the centre, and, therefore, are less agitated by the same revolutions.

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XXIX. Who that had enjoyed the friendship of the Kings of England and Poland, and the Queen of Sweden, would have believed that the time would come when they would not find a retreat and shelter throughout the world?†

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* It was then a matter of much public comment how lightly a war against Spain had been decided in council.

† Pascal, no doubt, here alludes to Charles I. of England, driven into the Isle of Wight, in 1647; to John Casimir, king of Poland, compelled to seek an asylum in Silesia, in 1655; and lastly, to Queen Christina, who abdicated her throne in 1654.



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## XXX. † *Tyranny*

† Consists in a desire of unusual and irregular domination.

There are various bodies of brave, of handsome, of witty, or of pious persons, each of which has its own sphere and rule, but none elsewhere: they sometimes encounter; and the brave and the handsome contend for mastery,—for their superiority is of a different nature. They can come to no agreement: and their error is, that each is determined to get the upper hand. Neither party succeeds, even by force; that avails them nothing with the wise, and can do no more than control the mere outward conduct.

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## XXXI. † *Tyranny.*

Such language, then, as this, is indecent and tyrannical:—"I am handsome, I ought to be feared. I am brave, I ought to be beloved. I am" . . . . . .

Tyranny consists in aiming to get in one way what we can only properly get by a different one. We pay various degrees of deference to various kinds of merit: the deference of affection, to amiableness; the deference of fear, to force; the deference of implicit submission, to learning.

This deference ought to be yielded; it is an injustice to withhold it, and an injustice to demand one kind in the place of another. It is equally offensive and perverse to say,—"Such a one is not brave, I will not esteem him; he is wanting in ability, therefore I will not fear him."

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## XXXII. † *Diversity.*

† Theology is a science; but, after all, what are sciences? A man is an instrument; but, when you anatomize it, do you find it to consist in his head, his heart, the stomach, the veins, each individual vein, each part of a vein, the blood, each of the humours of the blood?

† Town and country, from a distance, appear town and country; but as we approach we find houses, trees, roofs, leaves, flowers, insects, the separate limbs of insects, in infinite number. All these are included under the term country.

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XXXIII. † Diversity is so endless, that every one's gait, tones of voice, cough, sneeze* . . . . . Fruits are distinguished; among grapes are the Muscats, those of Coindrieu,† of Desargues, and of Cette.‡ Furthermore, have these several places ever produced similar grapes, and has any *one* grape two seeds like each other? &c.

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XXXIV. How many objects has the telescope discovered, which philosophy had never conceived of before? We should absurdly misinterpret the expressions of Scripture, as to the vast number of the stars, by saying "There are but a thousand and twenty-two; we are sure of it."

XXXV. † There are herbs upon the face of the

* The two copies add "are different."

† Coindrieu, on the right bank of the Rhone, produces a kind of white grape, very celebrated.

‡ Probably of Frontignan, a place near Cette.

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earth; we see them ourselves. On the moon we can discern none. And on these herbs there are leaves, and on the leaves insects; but beyond this nothing more? O rash presumption! Mixed substances, then, are composed of elements, and the elements not! Presumption again! See here a nice distinction: we must not speak of things that are not visible to the eye; let us talk like other people, but not think like them.

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XXXVI. Time heals our griefs and our dissensions, because we change and are no longer the same persons; neither the offenders nor the offended are alike. It is as if we should encounter a people that we have irritated after the lapse of two generations. They are French, but not the same Frenchmen.

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XXXVII. + It is not only that we see things under a different aspect, but with different eyes; we no longer care to find them alike.

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XXXVIII. + Such a person no longer admires her whom he loved ten years ago. I doubt it not. She is no longer the same, nor he either. He was then young, and she also; she is now otherwise. Were she the same, he would perhaps admire her still.

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XXXIX. + *Inconstancy.*

+ We fancy we may play upon man as we touch an instrument. He is an instrument indeed, but how irre-

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gular, capricious, inconstant; how full of discords! In doing it, we ought to know where are the . . . .*

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## XL. + *Inconstancy.*

Things possess various qualities, and the mind has various inclinations; for, nothing presents itself in a simple form to the mind; and the mind never applies itself simply to any object. Thence it happens, that we sometimes weep and smile for the same thing.

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XLI. Our feeling of the emptiness of present pleasures, and our unconsciousness of the vanity of those which are absent, are the causes of our inconstancy of mind.

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XLII. The capability of a man's virtue ought not to be judged by extraordinary efforts, but by his habitual conduct.

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XLIII. I have little admiration for an extraordinary measure of one virtue, such as bravery; unless I see at the same time an equally extraordinary measure of the opposite one; as in Epaminondas, who possessed great valour and great humanity likewise; otherwise it is not elevation, but rather a baseness of character. Greatness

* The remainder of this passage is wanting. (French Editor.)

This fragmentary remark will remind the reader of the passage in Hamlet: "There is much music, excellent voice in this little organ; yet cannot you make it speak? Why do you think that I am easier to be played on than a pipe? Call me what instrument you will; though you can fret me, you cannot play upon me."—Act 3, Sc. 7. (Transl.)

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is not displayed by an extreme degree of one quality only, but by a combination of opposing ones, and by the harmony of all, one with another.

But, perhaps, this may be only a sudden movement of the spirit in one or other of the extremes, like the hasty blaze of a bonfire. Be it so; yet this at least shows a capability in the soul, if not greatness.

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XLIV. Those addicted to irregularities charge the correct with deviating from nature, and say it is only themselves who follow her; as those on board a vessel fancy the persons on shore are receding from them: the same kind of language is heard on all sides. There must be some fixed standard of judgment. Those on shore judge those in the vessel; but where are we to have a fixed point in morals?

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XLV. When all moves together, nothing appears to move; as in a vessel. When all fall into irregularities, none seem to go wrong. It is he who stands still that perceives, as from a fixed station, the deviations of others.

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XLVI. Evil is common, and its forms are infinite; virtue is rare. But there is a species of evil, which is as difficult to be met with as what is called good; and that particular kind of evil, on this account, often passes for good. It needs a kind of especial greatness of mind to attain to it, as well as to that which is good.

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XLVII. + The act of sneezing shall be seen to absorb a person as much as his ordinary occupation.* But we do not draw from it the same inferences against the greatness of his nature, because it is involuntary; and even if he fall into it by an act of his own, it is still against his will; the act that caused it was done not for that purpose, but for another; and thus it is not to be regarded as a mark of the feebleness and abjectness of man.

+ It is no disgrace to a man to yield to sorrow; but it is disgraceful to yield to voluptuousness. This is not because sorrow comes upon us from external sources, and pleasure is of our own seeking; for we may purposely seek causes of grief, and sink under them, without this species of degradation. Whence is it, then, that it is noble to sink under sorrow, and disgraceful to be subdued by pleasure? It is, that sorrow does not attract and tempt us. It is, that we voluntarily choose it, and put ourselves under its yoke, while we possess a liberty of choice; and thus man yields, as it were, to himself: but in the case of pleasure, it is the man who is overcome by pleasure. Now it is mastery and sway that constitute glory, and subjection alone is disgrace.

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XLVIII. When we are well, we wonder what we should do if we were sick; when we are sick, however, we use remedies cheerfully; our sufferings compel us. We have no longer any inclination for those exercises and amusements to which health prompted us, but which are incompatible with the pressure of infirmity. Nature then suggests tastes and inclinations suited to our present

* *Vide* Montaigne, Book iii., chap. 5.

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circumstances. It is only the fears that ourselves indulge, and not nature inspires, which cause us uneasiness; because they add to the circumstances in which we actually are, the feelings belonging to the circumstances in which we are not.

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XLIX. We are so ill-constituted that we cannot take an interest in anything, without becoming disturbed if unsuccessful;—a result which a hundred circumstances may at any time bring about. Whoever finds the secret of taking satisfaction in good, without uneasiness at disappointment, has made a great achievement. † It is a kind of perpetual motion.

L. † Those who are always sanguine under adverse circumstances, and elated in prosperous conjunctures, if they do not suffer equal distress at untoward ones, are wont to be pleased under disappointment, and glad to discover grounds of hope, in order to show their continued buoyancy of spirit; and to cover, by the satisfaction they thus feign, that which they experience, from seeing the frustration of their affairs.*

LI. † Our nature is formed for motion; total rest is death.

LII. † Marton perceives plainly enough, that our nature is corrupt, and man is fallen from virtue; but he does not perceive why he cannot rise again.†

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* The original of this passage is involved and difficult, and I cannot feel certain of having rendered it with correctness. (Transl.)

† The French Editor, contrary to his usual custom, does not furnish any information of the author here referred to. (Transl.)

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LIII. Man is full of wants: he loves only those who can satisfy them. Such a one is a good mathematician, it may be said; but then I must work problems; he would turn me into a proposition. Another is a great warrior; he would take me for a besieged fortress. I want a facile disposition, that knows how to accommodate itself to all my necessities.

LIV. A true friend is so valuable, even for the great themselves to speak in their behalf, and defend them in their absence, that they should omit no effort to possess one.* But let them take care to make a good choice; for if they get hold of a fool, he will be of no real service, whatever good he may say of them; and, in fact, he will say nothing that is good; for, possessing no weight of character, and carrying no authority, he will slander them to his boon companions for mere good fellowship.

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LV. As the understanding may be injured, so may the opinions. We form both by our social intercourse; and thus society, whether good or bad, tends either to form or impair them. It is, then, above all things important, to choose such society whereby they may be formed, and not impaired; and the choice cannot be properly made, if they have not been already formed and not impaired. In this manner the whole forms a circle; happy those who can deviate from it without danger!

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* "The best way to represent the manifold use of friendship, is to cast and see how many things there are which a man cannot do himself. . . . . If a man have not a friend, he may quit the stage."—*Bacon.* (Transl.)

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LVI. Though some persons have no interest in what they affirm, we must not be too certain that they do not speak untruths: there are those who lie for the mere love of lying.*

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LVII. †A man stands at a window to see the passers-by: if I pass, am I to say, he stands there to see me? No; he is thinking nothing about me, in particular. Now, when a person loves a female on account of her beauty, does he really love her? No; the small-pox, which may destroy her beauty, but leave her alive, will destroy his love also.

And so, if I am loved for my judgment, or my memory, is it myself that am loved? No; I may lose these faculties; yet I myself shall remain. Where then is the *individuality*, if it lies neither in the body, nor in the mind? And how can we love either the body or the mind, but for those qualities which do not form the *individuality;* inasmuch as they are perishable? Can we love the mind of another abstractedly, and without reference to its qualities? That cannot be. We do not then love the person, but only the qualities.

† Let us then no longer ridicule those who affect distinction for their place and office; for no one is loved but on account of adventitious qualities.

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LVIII. This "*me*"‡ is hateful. You, Miton,§ dis-

* In Madame Perier's writing.

† This passage is not in the MS. autograph; but it is found in the copies.

‡ This expression was one which the author used frequently to descant upon to his friends.

§ Miton was probably the person whom Tallemant des Réaux speaks of

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guise it; you do not, however, thus get rid of it; you are therefore still hateful.

Not at all; for in behaving, as we do, civilly to every one, none have any cause to hate us. That is true, if we only hated, in the *word*, the annoyance which it occasions us.

But if I hate it because it is usurping, because it makes itself the centre of everything, I shall never cease to hate it.

In short, the word has two qualities; it is usurping in itself, as it makes itself the centre of everything; it is injurious to others, even in designing to do them service; for *self* is the enemy of every one, and would be a universal tyrant. You may take away the annoyance it causes, but not its injustice; and thus you do not render it pleasing to those who dislike injustice. You render it pleasing only to those who are unjust themselves, and therefore do not consider it their enemy; and thus you continue unjust yourself, and can please only those who are the same.

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LIX. It is an injustice that others should be allowed to attach themselves to me, though for their own pleasure, and with entire free-will. I should deceive them in permitting such a partiality; I can be no object for any to rest in, and have nothing that can afford them satisfaction. Am I not shortly *to die?* Then the object of

in the following passage:—"He (Desbarreaux) preaches Atheism wherever he goes; and one day, at St. Cloud, he was passing the Passion-week with Miton, a *great gambler*, Potel, Counsellor of the Châtelet, Raincys, &c., to spend their *carnival*, as he said."

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their pleasure will die also! As I should be culpable in suffering a falsehood to be believed, although it might be insinuated quietly, and told and received with satisfaction; in the same way am I culpable in suffering myself to become an object of attachment. If I attract the affection of others to myself, I ought to warn those who would make themselves parties to the deception, that they should be on their guard against it, whatever advantage might accrue to myself from it; and not attach themselves to me, when their life and their cares ought to be devoted to pleasing God, or seeking to do so.*

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## LX. † *Vanity of Knowledge.*

Knowledge of external things will not compensate my moral ignorance in a time of affliction; but moral proficiency will always afford me consolation under the absence of external knowledge.

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LXI. I was for a long time immersed in the study of the abstract sciences, and became disgusted with the little communication that I could hold on such subjects with others. When I commenced the study of *man*, I saw that those abstract sciences are not fitted for him; and that I departed further from my proper sphere, by my addictedness to them, than others in their ignorance of them; thus I excused them for knowing so little about

* This fragment presents the interesting feature, that it is in the handwriting of Domat, who has added the following note:—"Madame Perier has the original of this paper." Madame Perier has reproduced the passage in her memoir of her brother.

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these things. I thought, however, I should at least find companionship in the study of man, and that this was of all others the fittest for him. I was mistaken. There are fewer who addict themselves to this study, than to geometry.

+ It is only through want of taste for this study that we are thrown upon others; but is it not that, after all, this is not the knowledge that man *ought* to possess; and that it is more for his *happiness* to be ignorant of it?

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LXII. + We are so ignorant of ourselves, that many think they are going to die when they are well, and many think they are well when they are near death; not perceiving the approach of an attack of fever, or that an abscess is beginning to form.

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LXIII. The things to which we are most addicted,—such, for instance, as the careful concealment of narrowness of means,—are often very insignificant: a mere fancy, which our imagination magnifies into importance. Another turn of imagination reveals to us, in an instant, the fallacy.

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LXIV. Imagination exaggerates petty objects, till they fill the mind in an extravagant degree; and, in the same way, with a rash presumption, she diminishes great objects, and brings them down to her own standard. This is seen in the manner of some, in speaking of the Supreme Being.

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LXV. † *Lustravit lampade terras.* The weather has little connexion with my moods.

Fancies, with me, depend not upon weather. I have my storms and my sunshine within; the success or reverses of my affairs even, affect me little. I like to set myself against fortune; the very glory of overcoming her, elates me: and, on the other hand, I sometimes feel depressed in the midst of prosperity.*

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LXVI. † *Spongia solis.*

When we see certain events always recurring alike, we conclude that they originate in a natural necessity; as that day will succeed day, &c.; but nature often deceives our expectations, and does not follow her own laws.

LXVII. The mind naturally inclines to some kind of belief, and the will to some kind of affections; so that, for

* From the quotation heading this Thought, it is evident that it was suggested by the following passage in Montaigne, of which it is a kind of refutation;—"*Ce vénérable sénat d'aréopage jugeait de nuict, de peur que la veue des poursuivans corrompist sa justice. L'air mesme et la serenité du ciel nous apporte quelque mutation, comme dit ce vers grec en Cicero,*

'*Tales sunt homines mentes, quali pater ipse*
*Juppiter auctiferâ* lustravit lampade terras.'"—Essays, Book ii., ch. 12.

These two Latin verses, which are in the "*Fragmenta Poëmatum*" of Cicero, are an indifferent translation of verses 135 and 136, Book xviii., Odyssey. (French Editor.)

This questionable position, of the insusceptibility of the mind, from the influences of the weather, has been often maintained, and seems to originate in a kind of stoicism, which scorns one of the weaknesses to which all are more or less subject. Few were more likely than Pascal, and Johnson, (who used to make similar boasts,) under the pressure of their heavy infirmities, to be influenced, although unconsciously, by changes of temperature, and genial or severe seasons. (Transl.)

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want of proper objects, they are prone to attach themselves to such as are unfitting.

LXVIII. Grace will always be found in the world as well as nature, inasmuch as it is in a measure congenial to us. Thus there will always be Pelagians, and orthodox believers; and always conflicts going on between them.

It is the first birth that produces the one, and the second, the other.

LXIX. † Nature is ever recommencing the same things,—such as years, days, hours; spaces also, and numbers, follow uniformly each other. There is, by these means, formed a kind of infinitude and eternity. Not that any of these things are really infinite or eternal; but these finite things multiply themselves infinitely; thus it seems to me, it is only the number which multiplies them that is infinite.

---

LXX. ‡ When we hear it said, that cold is only the motion of certain globules, and light the "*conatus recedendi*" * which we experience, we feel surprised. And pleasure, then, is only a kind of excitement of the animal spirits. We had certainly formed an entirely different idea of these things, and such opinions are wholly opposed to all our prepossessions. The feeling of warmth, a sensation that affects us so differently from the touch,—the perception of sound and of light,—all these seem mysteries; whereas those definitions are as

* This is the "centrifugal force." Pascal has borrowed this expression from the definition of light, given by Descartes in his "*Principia Philosophiæ*," Part iii., sec. 55.

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gross and insensate as a stone. It is true, the minute influences which enter by the pores affect other nerves, but they are nerves still.

---

LXXI. † Nature has a tendency to reproduce herself. A grain thrown into good soil, multiplies. A principle planted in a sound understanding, yields fruit.

† Numbers resemble space, though in their nature they are so different.

† All are produced and directed by the same hand: the root, the branch, the fruit, the principle, the results.

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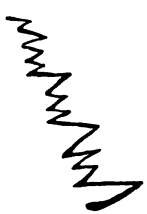
LXXII. † Nature works progressively: "*itus et reditus.*" She passes on and returns; then recedes further, then twice the space back, then further than ever, &c.

† The flow of the sea is in this form; the course of the sun is thus



Literally imitated from the MS.

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LXXIII. † Man's nature is not always progressive. It has its advances and returns.

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† Fevers have their chills and burnings; and the cold fits show as much the violence of the fever as its heats.

† The inventiveness of man proceeds from age to age in the same course.—† The humanity and the malignity of the world is, at all times, much alike.

"*Plerumque gratæ principibus vices.*"

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LXXIV. † After we have been accustomed to use bad reasons for establishing the phenomena of nature, we become unwilling to admit good ones, when they are furnished to us. The instance given was, the circulation of blood, to show why the vein swells under the ligature.

— † The history of the pike and the frog of Liancour. They always give this, and nothing else.

---

LXXV. † If an animal performed by reason what it does instinctively, and could utter by means of intelligence what it expresses by instinct, for summoning its comrades to the chase, and warning them that their prey is found at last, it would be able to speak in matters of more importance to itself: as, for instance, to say, "Bite for me this cord that hurts me, and which I cannot reach."

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## LXXVI. † *Emulation.*

Animals have no affections. A horse feels no admiration for its companions. There is an emulation between them on the race-course, but it leads to no results; when



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they are in the stable, the dull and ill-made horse does not give up its oats to the other, as men require their fellows to do. They have no thought but for themselves.

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## LXXVII. † *Emulation.*

† From early infancy, admiration spoils everything. "How well that was said! how well that was done! how clever he is!" &c.

† The children at P. R., (Port Royal,) who are not allowed this incentive to envy and emulation, fall into indifference.

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LXXVIII. Have you never met with persons, who, by way of reflection upon your moderate opinion of them, are fond of descanting upon the number of people of distinction who admire them? I should reply to all this, "Show me what are the merits that have procured you their admiration, and I will admire you myself."

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LXXIX. Would you wish that others should think well of you? say nothing about it.

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LXXX. To pity the unfortunate is not opposed to self-love, but the contrary: persons are well pleased to have the opportunity of showing this mark of humanity, and of gaining the reputation of tenderness at no expense.

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LXXXI. Great actions concealed, are most to be admired. When I meet with such in history, as at

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page 184,* I am greatly delighted. Yet, after all, they have not been effectually concealed, since by some means or other, they have become known; and although all that was possible was done by the parties to hide them, this little outlet by which they have come to light, spoils all: the finest part of all was the *wish* to conceal them.

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LXXXII. The world is in possession of every good principle; it fails only in their application. For instance, no one doubts that we ought to expose our life for the public good, and many do it; but for religion, *none!*

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LXXXIII. It is only the contest that gives pleasure, not the victory. We like to see animals fight, but not the conqueror destroy the conquered. What should we care for, except the end—the victory? And yet, as soon as that is attained, we are wearied. So it is in gaming, so in researches after truth. We like to watch the conflict of opinions, but when truth is demonstrated, our interest is gone. To revive our interest, new controversies must be created.

So with the passions: there is a pleasure in seeing two opposite ones in contention; but when one has the entire mastery, it becomes mere brutality.

It is not things themselves, but the pursuit of things, that we value. Thus, in plays, quiet scenes without

* This passage is not in Pascal's writing. The person to whom it was dictated, no doubt omitted to note the book whence page 184 is here quoted: it is, in all probability, Montaigne's Essays.



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agitation excite no interest, or misery without hope, or brutal passion, or unmitigated severity.

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LXXXIV. See the vanity of the art of painting! To challenge admiration, by fidelity of resemblance to things for whose originals we have none.

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LXXXV. Two countenances resembling each other, neither of which, when seen alone, causes ridicule, become laughable when brought together.

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LXXXVI. Rivers are moving roads, which carry us on to our destinations.

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LXXXVII. There are many who understand the sermon just to as good purpose as they understand the prayers.

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LXXXVIII. A dealer in jests, a miserable character.

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LXXXIX. † Experience shows us an enormous difference between devotion and goodness.*

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XC. Discourses upon humility are occasions of pride to the vain, and of humiliation to the humble. So, those upon pyrrhonism are matter of peremptoriness to the

* Montaigne says somewhere the same thing:—"*Entre la dévotion et la bonté.*"

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peremptory. Few speak humbly upon humility; few chastely upon chastity; few upon pyrrhonism in a spirit of doubt. We are made up of falsehood, duplicity, inconsistency; and we hide and disguise these things from ourselves!

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## XCI. † *Vanity.*

† The cause and the effect of love.—Cleopatra.

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Whoever would fully learn the vanity of man, has but to consider the causes and the consequences of love. The cause is, perhaps, some indescribable trifle, "*un je ne sais quoi*," (Corneille,) and the consequences are tremendous. This trifle, this thing so insignificant that we cannot define it, moves the earth, its potentates, its armies, the whole universe!

Had Cleopatra's nose been a little shorter, the whole face of the world might have been changed.

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## XCII. † *Vanity.*

Wonderful indeed is it to see a thing so palpable as the vanity of the world so little understood, that to assert the folly of aspiring to its grandeurs should excite surprise.

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XCIII. Vanity is so rooted in man's heart, that a soldier, a powder-monkey, a cook, a porter, will boast of their performances, and lay themselves out for admiration; aye, and philosophers also. And writers against such weaknesses seek praise for their good writing; and readers for reading it; and I, who am writing this,

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have perhaps the same desires; and so have my readers also.

---

## XCIV. † *Pride.*

Curiosity is nothing but vanity. Persons, for the most part, wish only to learn, for the purpose of speaking of their knowledge. We should never undertake voyages or travels were we not to have to talk of them,—were it for the mere pleasure of seeing, without the hope of communicating what we saw.

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XCV. In passing hastily through a town, we do not trouble ourselves about people's opinion of us; but when we reside in a neighbourhood for a time, we are anxious to be thought well of. What length of time should this be for? A time proportioned to our brief and fugitive existence!

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XCVI. Such is our ambition, that we wish to be known by all the world, and even by those who are to come after us. And such our vanity, that the good opinion of half a dozen persons around us affords us content and satisfaction!

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XCVII. † On the desire of esteem among those around us.

— † Pride keeps invincible possession of us amidst our errors, miseries, &c. We even part with life with satisfaction, provided we can be talked of.

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— † Vanity, play, the chase, visits, foolish plays, perpetuating a name.

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There is such a charm in glory, that whatever we connect with it,—even death itself,—we love it still.

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XCVIII. † Men do not maintain themselves in virtuous conduct by their own power, but by the counterpoise of two opposing vices; as we remain stationary under the influence of two conflicting winds. Take away one of these vices, and we fall into the other.

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XCIX. There are some vices which only maintain their hold by the instrumentality of others, and which, if the trunk is removed, fall off like the branches.

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C. When malice gets reason on its side, pride is engendered, and reason is displayed in all its lustre.

— When austerity and severe habits have been unsuccessful in attaining true happiness, and nature is again followed, she becomes proud of her restoration.

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CI. Never are evil deeds so thoroughly and heartily committed as when conscience assents.

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CII. † Eclipses are said to presage trouble, because trouble is common; so that, as calamities are of continual occurrence, the prediction is often fulfilled: if they had been said to predict good, they would as often

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have proved fallacious. Happiness is assigned only to rare conjunctures of the skies; thus the divination is not often put to the test.

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CIII. I hold it to be a fact, that if all persons knew what they said of each other, there would not be four friends left in the world.* This is manifest from the disputes to which indiscreet reports, passing from one to another, often give rise.

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CIV. You have a bad habit in saying, "Pray excuse me." Now, but for the apology, I should not have known anything had been done wrong. Allow me to say, there is nothing amiss but the excuse.

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CV. I do not admire all these compliments:—"I give you a great deal of trouble;" "I am afraid I am tiring you;" "I am afraid this is tedious." Either you embarrass, or you give offence.

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CVI. Cesar appears to me to have been too old when he set about conquering the world for his amusement. Such a pastime might do for Augustus or Alexander: they were young persons, whom it is difficult to restrain; but Cesar ought to have known better.

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CVII. The example of Alexander's chastity has not made so many continent, as that of his drunkenness has produced intemperance. It causes no shame in others to

* Pascal, doubtless, meant here to imply the same limitation (*by nature*) as in the Thought, No. CLV. (Transl.)

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be less virtuous, and it seems excusable to be not more vicious than he. Persons think the vices they fall into not altogether those of the commonalty, when they see them to belong to such great men; not perceiving that in that respect they are on a level with the very lowest. Their resemblance to them is of the same kind as that by which they themselves resemble common people; for, however exalted they may be, there are points in which they come in contact with the mere dregs of society. They are not beings elevated, as it were, in the air, abstracted from every thing earthly. By no means. If they are greater than ourselves, it is that they overtop us in height; their feet are on a level with other men's. In that, they are on an equality, they stand upon common ground; and are ignoble as ourselves, as the most insignificant of beings, as children, as the brutes.

---

CVIII. † We like to trace the course of error—the passion of Cléobutine, for instance, because she is insensible of it: she would be uninteresting were she not deceived.

— † A king takes pleasure in the society of a prince, because the contrast diminishes the rank of the latter.

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CIX. Reason sways us more imperiously than a master; in disobeying the one we are unhappy, in disobeying the other we are fools.

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CX. If we would reprove another with advantage, and convince him of his error, we should observe in what



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way he looks at the matter in question, (for there will usually be some measure of truth in his views,) and concede that point to him, while we explain to him the particulars in which his fallacy lies. He will be satisfied with this, for he will think he was not entirely mistaken, but only failed in seeing the question on all its sides. A man does not blame himself for not seeing everything, but he dislikes to find himself under an error; and this, perhaps, is because, naturally, all are incapable of universal knowledge, and yet, naturally, he cannot be mistaken in the way he looks at the matter: the impressions of the senses being always just.

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CXI. † Shall we destroy life in order to prevent wickedness? That is to commit two crimes instead of one. "*Vince in bono malum.*" St. Aug.*

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CXII. Force is the ruler of the world, not opinion; but opinion avails itself of force.

† It is constraint which forms opinion. Slackness is, in my opinion, agreeable. Why? Because any one liking to dance upon a tight rope will be alone in his taste, and I can get up a larger number who will say, that it is not agreeable.†

---

CXIII. It is the effect of constraint, not of custom; for those who are capable of originality are few: the larger number will only follow the lead of others, and refuse

* This sentiment, which Pascal, quoting from memory, attributes to St. Augustin, is from St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, ch. xii. 21:— "Overcome evil with good."

† This passage, like a few others, is obscure; and I cannot feel certain that it is correctly rendered. (Transl.)

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praise to those who aim at distinction by their inventions. And if these latter persist in their object, and despise such as are not inventive, the others will treat them with ridicule, or even with violence, if possible. Let none, therefore, pique themselves upon such acuteness, or let them be satisfied to remain as they are.*

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CXIV. + Memory and pleasure are feelings; and even geometrical propositions become feelings; for reason renders them natural, and natural feelings are effaced by reason.

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## CXV. *Venice.*

+ What advantage would you derive from it, except for the necessities of the princes, and the honour of the people? If they had demanded it of you, and for obtaining it had invoked the aid of Christian princes, you might have made their plea available. But, that during fifty years all the princes should have been uselessly exerting themselves, and that there should have been such a pressing necessity to obtain . . . . .†

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CXVI. The last act is sanguinary, beautiful as is all the rest of the play. Dust is cast upon the head, and there is an end, and for ever.

---

* The beginning of this passage, "It is the effect of constraint, not of custom," was evidently connected with a preceding thought, which is wanting in the MS.

† This unfinished fragment of historical allusion has a degree of obscurity which is apparently aggravated by being dictated by Pascal to a very bad writer.

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CXVII. † Death is feared when peril is distant, not in peril; for man must be man.

---

CXVIII. † Sudden death is the only thing to be feared; therefore it is that Confessors surround the persons of the great.*

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CXIX. Where is the difference between a soldier and a Chartreuse monk, in their habits of obedience? Both are dependent and must obey, and their exercises are equally painful: the soldier, however, has always a hope of attaining to command, but never succeeds; for commanders, and even princes, are slaves and dependents; yet, still he hopes and labours on: the monk, on the other hand, takes a vow to be never otherwise than dependent. Thus they are alike in the perpetual servitude of both; they differ only in regard to hope, which the one always enjoys, the other has for ever renounced.

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CXX. † Reasons which, viewed from afar, seem to limit our vision,—when near, limit it no longer; we then begin to see beyond them.†

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CXXI. Few things afford consolation, because few things afflict us.

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CXXII. "*Ferox gens nullam esse vitam sine armis rati.*" These love death better than peace: the others

* Second Col. MS. of P. Guerrier, p. 192.
† MS. of *Bibl. Roy.* Portfolios Vallant.

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love death better than war. There is no opinion which may not be maintained at the risk of life, the love of which seems so strong and so natural.*

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CXXIII. † Dogmatism is a bad supporter of truth.

† Many certainties are contradicted.

† Many falsehoods pass without contradiction.

† Contradiction is no mark of falsehood, neither is the absence of contradiction a mark of truth.

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CXXIV. † We do not become tired of eating and sleeping daily, for hunger and drowsiness are every day recurring; but for this, they would weary. So, without a hunger for spiritual things, they also would weary. "Hunger after righteousness." (Beatitude 8th.)

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CXXV. By chance, thoughts are produced; by chance, they are lost; there is no method for preserving or acquiring them. (Erased.)

— † A thought has lapsed; I wished to transcribe it. Instead of doing so, all I can write is, that it has lapsed. (Erased.)

---

CXXVI. In the act of writing down a thought, it sometimes escapes me; but this only reminds me of my weakness, which I am prone hourly to forget. This is

* Montaigne, Book i., ch. 40. "Every opinion is strong enough to admit of its being supported at the price of life. Cato, when consul, having to secure certain towns in Spain to the empire, and having forbidden the inhabitants to bear arms, great numbers killed themselves. '*Ferox gens nullam vitam rati sine armis esse.*'"—Tit. Livi, Book xxxiv., ch. 17.

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as instructive to me as the recovery of my thought would be; for I ever desire to know my own nothingness.

CXXVII. † *Reasons, effects.*

† Epictetus. Those who say you have a headache,* . . . . it is not the same thing. We are certain of our good health, but not of our rectitude; and, in reality, his remark is absurd. (*Vide* inf. 87.)

† And yet he believed he carried conviction with him in saying, it is either in our own power or not. But he did not perceive that it is not in our power to regulate the heart; and he was wrong in the conclusion he has come to respecting Christians.

CXXVIII. St. Augustin saw that men laboured after shadows at sea, in battle, &c. He was not acquainted with the rule by which certain writers prove that they ought to do this. Montagne has perceived that we are disgusted with a person of imperfect understanding, and that custom reconciles to everything; but he has not discovered the reason of this.

These persons have perceived effects, but not causes. They are, in comparison with those who have discovered the causes, like those who possess eyes only, in comparison with such as possess an understanding: for effects are in a measure perceptible by sense; but causes are discoverable only by the understanding. And although these effects are perceptible by the understanding, yet that kind of understanding is, in respect to the one which perceives causes also, like the corporeal in regard to the intellectual senses.

* See No. CXXIX.

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CXXIX. How is it that we see a cripple with unconcern, but a crippled mind disturbs us? It is because a lame man acknowledges that we walk straight, but a person of a crippled mind maintains that it is we who limp; were it not for this, we should pity, but not be disturbed by him.

Epictetus asks, with more force, Why are we not displeased at being told we have a headache; and yet take it amiss to be told we reason badly, or make an erroneous choice? The reason is, we may be quite certain we have not a headache, as that we are not lame; but we may not be so sure that we have not come to a wrong conclusion upon a question. Thus, having no other ground of certainty than that we have perceived the matter in question in this manner, as plainly as seemed to us possible; whereas another person has seen the direct opposite with equal plainness; we are by this means thrown into a state of embarrassment and surprise; and still more in this case, if many other persons ridicule our conclusion; for then we are compelled to set our own views against those of a multitude, which is ever venturesome and difficult. There can be no such conflict in regard to the testimony of the senses respecting the lame person.

Man is so constituted, that when often told he is a fool, he believes it; and when he often tells himself the same thing, he believes it also. We carry on a secret communion within ourselves, which requires to be carefully regulated; "*Corrumpunt mores bonos colloquia prava.*"*

* 1 Cor. v. 33:—"*Nolite seduci: corrumpunt mores bonos colloquia mala.*"

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We ought, as much as possible, to retire in silence within our own bosoms, and commune only with God, whom we know to be perfect Truth. In this way we best bring conviction home to ourselves.

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## CXXX. † *Causes and results.*

Rank: the people pay honour to persons of high birth. The half-informed despise them, contending that birth is a mere accidental advantage. The sensible respect them, not on the same ground as the common people, but from deeper views.* Devotees, possessing more zeal than knowledge, despise them, notwithstanding those considerations which procure them the respect of the wise; regarding them by a species of new light which their piety supplies: but mature Christians honour them, by a yet superior kind of light.†

Thus we see opinions maintained on one side or another, according to the degree of men's illumination.

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## CXXXI. † *Causes and results.*

It is true, then, that all the world lies under illusion; for even if the opinions of the people are sound, their own minds are not so; and they fancy truth to exist where it does not. There may be truth in their opinions, but it is not at the point where they suppose it to be. For instance, it is right to honour the aristocracy, but not because of any intrinsic advantage in birth, &c.

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* "*La Pensée de Derrière.*"—See No. CXXXIII.

† Written first, "by another and more recondite (*intérieur*) principle."

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## CXXXII. † *Cause and results.*

† Continual overthrow of conflicting opinions.

† We have then demonstrated the vanity of man by the esteem in which he holds things of no real importance. And thus all these opinions are overthrown. We have then shown that, vain as these opinions are, they have a solid foundation, and, therefore, the people are not so frivolous as is alleged. Thus, also, we have overthrown the opinion which tended to overthrow those of the people.

† We must now, however, set ourselves to invalidate this latter position, and prove it to be still true, that the people are shallow, although their opinions have some degree of soundness; inasmuch as they are not conscious of the truth they contain; and, assigning such truth where it does not properly inhere, their opinions are, in reality, fallacious and unsound.

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## CXXXIII. † *Cause and results.*

We ought to have a kind of *hidden thought,** whereby to judge of everything; while we hold the same language as the people.

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## CXXXIV. † *Cause and results.*

† Man's weakness is the source of many interesting demonstrations; as we learn to play skilfully on an instrument.

† It is an evil only through our weakness.

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* "*Une pensée de derrière,*"—a thought at the back of our heads. (Transl.)

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## CXXXV. † *Cause and effects.*

Inclination and force are the origin of all our actions: inclination, of the voluntary; force, of the involuntary.

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## CXXXVI. † *Greatness.*

† The habit of observing causes and effects shows the greatness of man, in dividing from his sensuality the ardour of his disposition. (See Thoughts, CLIV., CLXXXV., subs.)

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## CXXXVII. † *Causes and results.*

This is admirable! I am not to pay honour to a man clothed in brocade, and followed by seven or eight lackeys! Why, he may order me to receive lashes if I do not salute him! His very garment speaks compulsion.

It is the same with a richly caparisoned horse, in comparison with another in plainer harness. Montagne amuses himself by professing not to see any difference; wonders how any one else can; and asks the reason. "In truth," he says, "how is it?" &c.*

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CXXXVIII. Unbelievers are the most credulous of persons. They will believe the miracles of Vespasian, and not those of Moses!

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* Montaigne, Book i., chap. on "Inequality of Condition," has this remark:—"If you buy a horse, you take off his trappings, and examine him naked and stripped. Why do you, in estimating a man, look at him made up and ornamented?" This is probably the passage which Pascal alludes to: there does not seem to be any one beginning in the way above stated, —"In truth, how is it?"

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CXXXIX. Atheists demand perfect demonstration of every thing: now it cannot be clearly proved that the soul *is* material.

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CXL. Atheism indicates strength of mind, but only up to a certain point.*

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CXLI. The change of a man into a saint can only be effected by grace; whoever doubts this knows nothing of what a saint or a man really is.

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CXLII. Men can be taught everything but virtue; and yet there is nothing that they pique themselves so much upon possessing as virtue. They are vain of just that very thing which they have never acquired.

---

* It seems that Pascal, in this thought, had present to his mind the 3d ch. of the 1st Book of a work now little known, which Charron has devoted to an "Apology for Religion." It is earlier than that of "*La Sagesse*," and is entitled, "*Trois Livres pour la religion catholique, apostolique et romaine, contre tous athées, idolâtres, juifs, mahométans, hérétiques, et schismatiques.*" Paris 1602. Charron distinguishes three kinds of atheists; and speaking of those who absolutely deny a God, says that this kind of atheism "can exist only in an extremely bold and hardened mind." "Certainly," he adds, "it seems to require as much or more boldness and hardihood of spirit to repel and resolutely strip ourselves of the fear and belief of a God, as to keep firm and constant hold of him. These are the two extremes, both rare and difficult, but the former the most so."

The sentiment of Pascal corresponds with that of Charron, but with a certain restriction and limitation. Pascal had doubtless read Charron, and he quotes him in his notes for the preface to the first part of the "Apology for Christianity."

Further, this thought has been published by Desmolets, and after him by the Dijon editor. But they have both materially altered the autograph text, by substituting the word "manque *de force*," for "marque *de force*," which latter is plainly written in the MS.

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CXLIII. † There are but two classes of men: the one, the just, who believe themselves to be sinners; the other, sinners, who believe themselves to be just.

CXLIV. † Half-hearted religionists are those who know the truth, but maintain it only so long as it falls in with their interests: after that they abandon it.

CXLV. † It is an evil to enjoy too much license.
† It is an evil to have our wants too well supplied.

CXLVI. † The habit of pampering the body increases by little and little. The nourishment may be abundant, but the real benefit small.

CXLVII. † Memory is necessary for all the operations of the mind.

CXLVIII. † Instinct and reason are indications of different natures.*

CXLIX. The arithmetical machine produces effects which approach nearer to thought than anything that animal nature can perform; but it is incapable of anything like will, such as is possessed by animals.

CL. † There is a total and essential difference between actions produced by the will, and every other description. — The will is one of the principal organs of belief: not that it forms the belief; but that things are true or false according to the aspect under which they are

* In the copy only.

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regarded. The will, which determines our satisfaction to one thing rather than another, prevents the mind from giving impartial consideration to the qualities of those to which it is not inclined; and thus, the mind coinciding with the will, contents itself with looking at the surface of what is preferred, and forming its judgment upon mere external appearances.

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CLI. All our reasoning is wont to be subservient to feeling. But fancy is both similar and opposed to feeling; so that they cannot be distinguished from each other. One person says my feeling is fancy; another avers that his fancy is feeling. Now, there ought to be some rule: reason offers herself; but she is easily turned about in every way, and thus there is no rule at all.

---

CLII. [+] When I consider the brief term of my earthly existence, absorbed in an eternity, past and to come; the insignificant space that I occupy, and the narrow limit of my perception;—when I see myself to be surrounded with infinitudes, unconscious of my existence, and unknown of me; I ask with alarm and astonishment, "Wherefore am I here, rather than elsewhere? wherefore now, rather than at some other time? Who has placed me here? By whose order, by whose arrangement, have this spot and this period been assigned to my existence?"

(In the margin is, "*Memoria hospitis unius diei prætereuntis.*")

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[+] How many kingdoms are there with which we are unacquainted?

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+ I feel terrified at the eternal silence of this infinitude of space!*

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CLIII. + Why is my knowledge thus limited? Why my stature no more than this? my existence fixed at a hundred, and not a thousand years? What reason had nature to assign and choose that number rather than any other out of infinitude, when there was no reason for choosing one rather than another; and the one offered no ground of preference over the other?†

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CLIV. + Man's licentiousness has given rise to excellent rules of police, of morality, and justice.

But at best, this vile principle of human nature, this "*figmentum malum*," is only covered over; it is not eradicated.

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CLV. *By nature* all men hate each other. Their natural inclinations have been made, as far as possible, to subserve the general good; but this is only a feint,‡ and a false show of charity. At bottom it is hatred still.

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+ Yet is it a greatness in man, in his irregularities, to be able to derive from them so admirable a code of laws, and to exhibit in them, thus, a semblance of charity.

---

* This line is found only in the copy.

† "*Rien ne tentant plus que l'autre.*" These words, obscure as they are, are literally transcribed from the MS.

‡ "*Ce n'est que feinte.*" The MS. has "*feindre :*" but this passage is written in a very bad hand. The first line has a correction in Pascal's own writing.

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CLVI. † I have not toleration for those whom I see living so negligently in the faith, and so greatly abusing a privilege of which I think I should make a use so different.*

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CLVII. If it is a strange blindness, to live without inquiring what we are; it is a fearful one to live in sin, while we believe a God.

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CLVIII. There are two things which instruct a man in everything relating to his nature,—instinct and experience.

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CLIX. † We ought to know ourselves: if this does not enable us to discover truth, it serves to regulate our lives, and is, in itself, the highest wisdom.

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CLX. A person once said to me, that she was accustomed to feel great joy and confidence after confession. Another told me, that she found her fears still continue. It struck me, that out of the experience of the two, a wholesome state of feeling might be formed, and that each was wanting in what might be gained from the other. The same thing happens often in other cases.

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CLXI. † 1st degree: to be blamed for doing ill, and praised for well-doing.

† 2d degree: to be neither praised nor blamed.

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CLXII. † Every one believes he is all things to him-

* This thought is in the copy only.

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self, for if he dies, all things die to him. Thence it arises that each one thinks himself all things to every one. We ought only to judge of nature by herself, not by ourselves.

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CLXIII. The example of the magnanimous deaths of the Lacedemonians, and others, does not interest us, for what does it amount to? But the example of the martyrs' deaths does interest us; they are members of ourselves. We have a common bond with them; their fortitude may inspire ours, not only by the force of example, but because it may perhaps have been the means of producing ours. There is nothing of all this in the example of Pagans: we have no tie to them; just as we do not become rich by the wealth of a stranger, but may expect to do so by that of a father or a husband.

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CLXIV. The indulgence of self-will never yields us peace, even if it procures us the full measure of our desires; but we have peace the instant we renounce it. Denying it, we can never be unhappy: indulging it, never happy.*

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CLXV. There is this in common in the lives of ordinary men and of saints,—that both aspire to happiness; and they differ only in the objects from which they expect it. Both the one and the other deem those their enemies who obstruct the attainment of their object.

We should make the will of God the rule by which to judge of good or evil, for it cannot be erroneous or

* This thought is not in the MS., but in the copy.

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undiscerning; and not our own will, which is ever full of error and obliquity.*

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CLXVI. True virtue then, and that alone, consists in hating ourselves,—for sensuality makes us hateful; and in aspiring to a state of being which deserves our love. But as we cannot love that which is not part of ourselves, we must love something that shall be *in*, and yet *not* actually ourselves; and this is the case with every man. Now, it is the Infinite alone, that can form such an object as this. The kingdom of God is within us; the universal good is in ourselves, and yet is not ourselves.

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CLXVII. † People in general have the power of dismissing from their thoughts what they choose. "Think not of the evidences of the Messiah," said the Jew to his son. It is the same also in our days. And thus, in the case of many, false systems of religion are perpetuated, and even true ones also.

† But there are those who have not the power thus to dismiss reflection, but who think the more, the more they are forbidden to do so. These persons discard false systems, and true ones also, if they do not deem their evidences solid.

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CLXVIII. When we desire to meditate upon God, do we not find something that distracts our thoughts,

* This thought, which appeared first in the 4th edition of the "*Pensées*," (1678,) is neither in the MS. nor the copies.



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and turns them to other subjects? This is an evil, and it is one born with us.

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CLXIX. All dissipating amusements are dangerous to a Christian life; but among the variety that the world has devised, none is more to be feared than theatrical representations. They are such natural and refined portraitures of the passions, that they serve to excite and awaken them in the bosom. This is especially the case with that of love; and chiefly when it is represented as chaste and honourable in its nature. The more innocent the emotion appears, to those who are themselves innocent, the more are they liable to be affected by it. Its fervour is agreeable to the natural disposition; we at once desire to experience feelings which we see so well represented; and thus, the conscience of the pure is satisfied by the propriety of the sentiments expressed; all fear is silenced; and we suppose that it can be no injury to purity to love with so much decorum and propriety. The theatre is quitted, with the heart full of the beauties and delights of passion, and the mind and conscience convinced of its innocence; and we are prepared to yield to the first impressions of so delightful a sentiment, or rather to seek occasions for a mutual flame; that we may experience the same pleasures, and even be exposed to the same vicissitudes, which we have seen so well depicted in the drama.*

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* These reflections upon the theatre are not in the autograph MS., but they are in the copy. They were first published by Bossut, in 1779.

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CLXX. Men often mistake the imagination for the heart; and believe themselves converted when they have merely begun to reform.*

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CLXXI. † How far is the knowledge of God from the love of him!

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CLXXII. † *"Fascinatio nugacitatis."*† That passion may not injure us, let us act as if we had but a week to live.

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† If we can give up a week, we can give up a life.

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CLXXIII. † Superstition and concupiscence.

† Scruples, unlawful desires.

† False fear.

† There is a fear, which does not spring from a belief in God, but from a doubt whether there be a God or not. Wholesome fear is produced by faith; a spurious one by scepticism: a sound fear unites itself with hope, and is the offspring of faith; for we place our hope in the God in whom we believe: an unsound one allies itself with despair; for we fear a God in whom we have no faith. The one fears to lose, the other to discover him.

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* This thought, which is not in the MS., was first published in the edition of 1678.

† A scripture expression: M. de St. Cyran (Confessor to Port Royal) thus translates it: — "Une certaine niaiserie *qui est dans l'homme et qui* l'ensorcelle."—(See Mem. de Lancelot, vol. ii., p. 106.)



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CLXXIV. † The hope which Christians entertain of eternal happiness, is mingled with joy as well as with fear: they are not like those who hope for a kingdom of which they have never been the subjects; but their aspirations are for holiness, and freedom from corruption; —and of these things they have already had some experience.

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CLXXV. The law does not destroy nature, but enlightens her; grace does not destroy the law, but brings it into exercise.

— The faith received at baptism is the source of all the life of the Christian, and of the converted.

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CLXXVI. We may make an idol even of truth; for truth, apart from charity, is not God; it is his image, and a representation (*une idole*) which must not be loved, or adored: still less must we love or adore its opposite, which is falsehood.

CLXXVII. † I can be contented with entire obscurity; but if God appoints me a condition partially obscure, that very partial obscurity it is which dissatisfies me; and that, because I do not find in it the merit attaching to perfect seclusion. This is a fault, and shows that I make an idol of my obscurity, without looking to the appointment of God, which ought alone to be the object of my adoration.

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CLXXVIII. † The waters of Babylon flow, and pass away, and draw us down with them.

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— + O holy Sion! where all is abiding, and nothing passes away!

— + We should sit on the surface of the waters, not below, nor within, but above; not stand, but sit; for humility we should sit, and for safety we should be above them. But we shall stand in the courts of Jerusalem!

— + Let us mark whether this pleasure be abiding or pass away; if it pass away, it is a wave of Babylon.*

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CLXXIX. All that is in the world is "lust of the flesh, lust of the eye, or pride of life:" "*libido sentiendi, libido sciendi, libido dominandi.*"† Unhappy earth, whose curse is to be devastated rather than watered by these waves of fire! Happy they who, on the surface of these streams, not engulfed by them, not carried down, but immoveably fixed, await in that secure and lowly posture the dawning rays of heavenly light; and, in calm repose, stretch out their hand to their Deliverer, that they may be placed firmly and for ever in the courts of the holy Jerusalem, where the pride of man

* These notes of Pascal, evidently taken from St. Augustin's "*Enarratio in Psalmum* 136: *Super flumina Babylonis,*" seem to be translations of the following passages:—"*Flumina Babylonis sunt omnia quæ hîc amantur et transeunt.—O sancta Sion! ubi totum stat et nihil fluit!—Sedeamus super flumina Babylonis, non infrà flumina Babylonis: talis sit humilitas nostra, ut nos non mergat. Sede super flumina, noli in flumine, noli sub flumine, sed tamen sede humilis, loquere non quomodo in Hierusalem. Ibi enim jam stabis. . . . Attendat quisquam ipsam felicitatem suam qua exultavit anima ejus. . . . attendat si non fluat illa felicitas, si potest certus esse de illa quia manet in æternum. Si autem non est certus et videt fluere unde gaudet, fluvius Babylonis est; sedeat supra et fleat.*"

† John, Ep. I., ch. ii. 16.—"*. . . . Omne quod est in mundo concupiscentia carnis est, et concupiscentia oculorum, et superbia vitæ.*"

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shall never again oppose and overthrow them! They weep, but it is not to see the perishing things of sense swept away by the desolating stream; their tears flow at the thought of the country of their love, the heavenly Jerusalem, which a tedious exile has never effaced from their fond remembrances!

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### CLXXX. *External observances.*

† There is nothing so dangerous as what is pleasing both to God and to man; for the states which are pleasing to God and man, have one quality which procures the favour of God, and another that of man, as is seen in the greatness of St. Theresa. That which pleases God is her deep humility under revelations; men admire her superior illuminations. And thus it is fatal to imitate such discourses as hers, in the belief that we are resembling also her holiness; and to suppose that, by such means, we are loving what God loves, and attaining to the state which secures his favour.

— † Better is it not to fast, and to be humble, than to fast and be self-righteous.

— † Pharisee, publican.

— † How useful would it be to me always to remember, that the same thing may equally injure or benefit me; and that all depends upon the blessing of God, which he bestows only upon what is done for his glory, and in conformity with his rules and designs. In this way, the manner may be as important as the thing itself, and perhaps more so, since God can extract good out of evil; but without God we may extract only evil out of good.

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— † Compare not thyself with others, but with Me. If thou find not Me in them, thou comparest thyself with abomination. If thou find Me in them, thou mayest make the comparison. But what is it that thou comparest? Is it thyself, or Me in thyself? If thyself, that also is abomination. If Me, thou comparest Me to Myself. I am God in all!

— † I speak to thee often, and give thee counsel, because thy conductor cannot speak to thee; for I will not suffer thee to be without a guide. And perhaps I do this in answer to his prayers; and thus he guides thee, unseen by thyself.

— † Thou wouldst not seek me, if thou didst not possess me. Therefore disquiet not thyself.

CLXXXI. † Every thing may prove fatal to us, even things formed for our service; as, in common things, a wall may kill us, or the steps of a staircase, if we do not walk uprightly.

— The smallest movement is influential upon the whole of nature; the entire sea is displaced by a stone. So, in grace, the minutest action may be followed by incalculable consequences. Thus, every thing has its importance.

† In every thing we do, we should look, not only at the act itself, but at our own state, past, present, future, and that of others whom it may concern; and examine the connexion of all these things. Thus shall we preserve circumspection of conduct.

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CLXXXII. † King, tyrant.

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— † Thus shall I have also my internal and secret thoughts.* I shall be careful of every step I take.

— † Splendour of establishment. Deference attached to establishments.

— † The pleasure of greatness consists in the power of dispensing happiness.

† The value of wealth is, that it should be dispensed liberally.

— † We should investigate the intrinsic value of all things. That of power is, to afford protection.

— † When force invades ceremonial observances; when a common soldier seizes the cap of a chief President, and throws it out of the window . . . . .

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CLXXXIII. † Are you less a slave for being loved and flattered by your master?

† You are, at best, but a slave; your master flatters you; he will beat you presently.

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CLXXXIV. † Perseus, King of Macedon. Paulus Emilius reproached him that he did not kill himself.

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CLXXXV. † Nature varies and imitates; artifice imitates and varies. (Erased.)

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CLXXXVI. † To write against those who render science too abstruse. Descartes.†

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* "*Mes pensées de derrière la tête.*"

† This note, which is only found in the copy, ought to be annexed to the Thoughts, No. IX., bis, page 195.

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CLXXXVII. * Since we cannot know all that is to be known of everything, we ought to know a little of every thing. For it is far better to acquire something of every thing, than everything in one branch of knowledge only: it is general information which is far the most pleasing. If we could have both, it would be all the better; but as we must choose between the two, we should decide for the latter; and this the world, which is in many things a good judge, sees and appreciates.*

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CLXXXVIII. * Nothing shows more the vanity of man than the causes and effects of love: it revolutionizes the whole universe.†

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CLXXXIX. My fancy leads me to dislike any one that makes a disagreeable noise in eating. How powerful is fancy! And what is it all for? Would you indulge such inclinations because they are natural. No; rather resist them.‡

* This thought is only entire in the copy. The autograph MS. contains only a small part of it, the paper on which it is written having been cut.

† This note is only in the copy. It appears to refer to Thought, No. XC., preceding.

‡ Only in the copy. This again refers to No. CLI.



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# CONVERSATIONS OF PASCAL.

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## ON THE CONDITION OF THE GREAT.

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## EPICTETUS AND MONTAIGNE.

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## DETACHED CONVERSATIONS AND REMARKS.

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# EDITORIAL NOTICES.

UNDER the title of "Conversations," which is obviously suggested by the subject, we have collected various communications and sayings of Pascal, which have, for the most part, been preserved by Nicole and Fontaine, and by Madame and Marguerite Perier.

The first of these discourses are those which he held with his young friend, the Duke de Roannez, on the condition of the great. A person present during the conversations wrote, after an interval of nine or ten years, the account which we now present, in the form in which it was first published by Nicole, in his "Treatise on the Education of a Prince," in 1670, under the title of "Discourse on the Condition of the Great." We have also restored Nicole's introduction to the narrative.

There is reason to believe that this relation was written only a short period after Pascal's death,—that is, about the close of 1662. The conversations with the Duke de Roannez, having been held about nine or ten years before, their date is fixed at about 1652-3.

The narrative of the celebrated conversation held by Pascal with Saci, at the Port Royal des Champs, in 1654, was written by Fontaine, the friend and secretary of Saci. Desmolets produced it in 1728, from the "Memoirs of Fontaine," then yet unpublished. Marguerite Perier was aware of this first account, and asked of the Abbé d'Étemare some information respecting it. "This dialogue," replied the latter, "must have been committed to writing on the spot by M. Fontaine. The style is undoubtedly his; but in all essential points, it has all the character of Pascal's sentiments; and that to such a degree, that it would have been impossible for

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Fontaine to invent anything like it."—Letter of June 20th, 1728, 1st Coll: MS. P. Guerrier, p. 543. We have given this conversation from the "Memoirs of Fontaine," (Utrecht, 1756.) The introduction of the ingenuous narrator, and the replies of Saci, are also faithfully transcribed, forming, as they do, a species of pleasing frame-work to the sentiments of Pascal, and setting them off with added originality and greatness.

The sayings of Pascal which follow, are extracted from the MSS. of P. Guerrier, the "Port Royal Logic," the "Essays" of Nicole, and Madame Perier's "Memoir."

Lastly, we reproduce in the form in which it appears in the preface of Stephen Perier, the narration of a discourse, in which Pascal explained, in the presence of his friends, the plan of his contemplated work, the "Apology for Christianity." Imperfect as it is, this narrative could not, without injury, be omitted in a collection of Pascal's writings.*

(*French Editor.*)

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Of the several papers referred to in the preceding remarks, the substance has been published before in translations of the "*Pensées*," but from imperfect editions in the original language, and entirely denuded of the introductory parts, and the interlocutory form in which they now appear;—in fact, as mere didactic essays or treatises. A cursory perusal will at once show how fully the French Editor's remarks are borne out, as to the charm which these additions contribute to the compositions.

The friendship of the Duke de Roannez for Pascal is a well-known incident in his life, and has already been made the subject of reference in the present and preceding volume. It furnishes a touching instance of a young person, in the very highest station, overlooking the large interval between himself and the object of his regard, (although Pascal was of no ungentle lineage or nurture,) and yielding to genius and

* *Vide* Mem. Pascal; "Provincial Letters." This last-mentioned paper is reserved for a subsequent volume. (Transl.)

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virtue,—not the mere vain patronage and ostentatious hospitality of rank and wealth,—but the graceful homage of a young and enthusiastic affection.

Nor was the high-born friend himself undeserving of those tender feelings, which he found so warmly reciprocated by Pascal. The records of their intercourse are necessarily scanty; but they are sufficient to show, that Pascal cherished for his younger friend an affection and esteem, which no merely external advantages, on his part, would have awakened. The basis of his friendship was, indeed, an ardent desire for the spiritual welfare of his pupil. It was this that he made the business of his life to promote; and there is the best reason to believe, that he found his reward in the unqualified submission of De Roannez's heart and conduct to those religious principles, of which Pascal was not only his teacher, but his example. Some affecting instances of this highest species of regard remain, as has been seen, in the letters to Mademoiselle De Roannez; and in one, in particular, this graceful (if somewhat exaggerated) tribute is left on record:—"I know that *that* person (her brother) possesses more virtue and judgment than I can pretend to." What enhances the interest of their friendship is, the early period of life at which it commenced, and the small discrepancy of age between the two. The instructor was little more than five years older than his pupil.

It was this master-principle, the religious interest of Pascal for his friend, that carried the attachment of the latter to an absorbing height. Elevated rank rarely meets, among the crowd by which it is surrounded, with a pure and disinterested regard. Still more rarely does the language of fidelity and truth, blended with true affection and friendship, find its way to the courtly ears of the great. It was evident, therefore, that the young nobleman deeply appreciated a regard which looked for no personal benefits, but was evinced by the warmest interest in his own everlasting welfare. To this, no doubt, was added, the fascination which the singular talents and attainments of Pascal threw around his social intercourse. His society, therefore, became—to use the

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simple language of Madame Perier—indispensable to the Duke de Roannez. He was a constant inmate of his residences in the country, and the capital. Their attachment remained unbroken during the brief term of Pascal's life; and when it was severed by the hand of death, De Roannez evinced his reverence for the memory of his friend, by an assiduous care, in common with his other literary associates, in transmitting to the world the lessons of wisdom and piety, from which he himself had derived such lasting benefits.

Of the nature of the instructions furnished by Pascal to his youthful pupil, we have a beautiful specimen in the pages that follow. In these lessons to the great, we find no levelling sentiments, or coarse common-places,—the offspring, often, of vulgar envy, or malignant designs. On the contrary, the substantial advantages of superior wealth and station are here (as in other parts of his writings) wisely conceded and enforced. But those adventitious benefits are reduced, by the analytical acuteness of a master's hand, to their intrinsic nothingness; and the true lesson is deduced, of their worthlessness in commanding the esteem of the wise and good, without the super-addition to those gifts of fortune, of intelligence and philanthropy proportioned to such mere accidental endowments. It is true, we are brought (as is acknowledged in the sequel of the discourse) to the threshold only of that school in which Pascal subsequently placed his distinguished pupil. The maxims taught, with an acumen and good sense not unworthy a Chesterfield, are adapted for worldly usefulness, and for the beneficial conduct of life. But we well know that they did not stop here; and that the instructor laboured no less assiduously to build up the Christian character, than to inculcate the habits and deportment befitting the most elevated station in society.

Both teacher and pupil were indeed fortunate in each other. There is little to be hoped for from youth, in whom eminence of talent and virtue are found to excite no admiration, and to kindle no emulation. No ambition is so wholesome, as that which urges to seek alliance and friendship with the wise and good; or which strives even to connect an otherwise unpre-

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tending name, with one destined to become worthily known to fame; and aims, in a measure, to

"Pursue the triumph, and partake the gale."

The Duke de Roannez possessed a heart which opened freely to these beneficial influences, and he has reaped his reward. As long as the writings of Pascal are remembered, and wherever they continue to instruct and delight mankind, the faithful attachment of his youthful pupil will be remembered; and in the land of their common birth, where so recently the new-born fervours of republican virtue have thrown rashly to the winds the proud distinctions in which an aristocratic people had so long delighted, there will remain to De Roannez a title brighter even than his dukedom,—that he was "THE FRIEND OF PASCAL."

The next dialogue,—that on "Epictetus and Montaigne,"—transports us to another scene. We leave the haunts of the youthful De Roannez and Pascal,—the Ducal Chateau, alternated with the Parisian hotel,—where youth and enthusiasm listened delighted to lessons of wisdom and virtue from his chosen friend; and find ourselves in the grave and tranquil retirement of Port Royal.

Memory loves to look back upon the chastened spirits and eminent intelligences,—the learning, the refinement, and piety, that were collected within those classic walls. Of the most distinguished among these able men, at the period when Pascal became their associate and coadjutor, (although not an inmate,) the pages of a former volume have retraced some recollections. Foremost in "the circle was Arnauld,—the exhaustless theologian, the athletic controversialist,— the laborious composer of volumes, numbered not by units but hundreds; who braved, during a lengthened life, the venom of Jesuitical hatred, and the more measured denunciations of a powerful hierarchy; and who, when driven by persecution to end his days in a foreign land, bequeathed the only possession that remained to him—a bold and holy *heart*—to find the rest of which its owner had long been deprived,—amidst

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those peaceful shades, where the only undisturbed years of his own existence had been passed.

Next was Nicole; the elegant, the accomplished, the classical: who did not allow even the offices of a devoted piety to interrupt the chosen pursuits of taste and learning, in which he was the acknowledged leader:—the instructor and friend of Racine; whose consistent deportment won the esteem, while his taste and erudition moulded the genius of the poet and tragedian. The *Le Maitres* were there also:—the one, who more commonly bore the name of De Saci, whose memory has been brought down to a late posterity as, first, the intrepid defender of what he believed to be Scriptural truth; and next, the translator, and pious commentator upon the pages of inspiration. And the elder brother, Antoine, who, acting, under the impulses of, perhaps, mistaken duty, turned his back upon the attractions of high forensic fame, and wealth, that he might secure (to follow up his own fanciful but significant figure*) an approving verdict from the supreme tribunal, from the "Judge of all the earth." The accomplished Fontaine was there also—the chosen friend and secretary of De Saci; who cheered the long imprisonment which he endured for the truth's sake; and to whose graphic pencil is owed the grouping and illustrations of the interesting scene here placed before us.

It is far from improbable that all these eminent men were present on the occasion of these intellectual evolutions,—this field-day (so to say) of reason and piety: although, while the rest stood by, with piled arms, pleased spectators of the display, the accoutrements were only borne by Pascal and De Saci. Controversy it could, indeed, scarcely be termed; while, although different views upon some points had been held by the two interlocutors, and different paths taken to attain to truth, the conclusions which each had arrived at were nearly the same. The discussion resembled more (if the figure may be pursued farther) the graceful manœuvres

* "I have been busy in pleading the causes of others; I am now studying my own." Memoir Le Maitre, Append. IV., "Provincial Letters."

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of friendly bands, which, after some little show of opposition, mingle in each other's ranks, and retire from the field in fellowship and cordiality.

In these days, the tendency is not so strong, as in those to which we are looking back, to range ourselves under systems of philosophy, or to pay undue homage to eminent names. Epictetus is now little heard of, but in the schools; and Montaigne is regarded as an antiquated humourist. But the false views and dangerous principles here combated, remain unchanged. Mankind are not less wont than heretofore, to entrench themselves in intellectual pride, and reject the aids to wisdom and virtue offered them from above; or to sink resistless under the allurements of voluptuousness and sin. Pascal here proves himself (whatever modern detractors may allege) as well acquainted with the real value of human systems of philosophy, as he was a master of divine learning. He does not deny to metaphysical schemes and codes of ethics, such merit as they possess, for refining the intellect, for directing worldly conduct, and promoting the comfort and well-being of society. But there he draws the line of demarcation. He knew that neither Epictetus nor Plato, neither Montaigne nor Descartes,—in short, no mere human intelligence, however elevated, and whether weaving its systems in the midst of heathen darkness, or under the beams of Christian revelation, could penetrate the mysteries of the Divine attributes, solve the difficulties with which man's own being is surrounded, give peace to an aching spirit, or furnish any well-grounded hope of an undying existence. Thence it was, that he himself seemed ever restless and uneasy till he had placed his foot upon the solid rock of a Divine revelation: and it is this which constitutes the high value of the present, and of all his religious instructions, that we are led by them directly to God, as revealing himself in the gospel, for peace in the present life, and an unclouded hope for that which is to be hereafter.

The few anecdotes and remarks which follow, possess a certain amount of interest; but, as is often the case in

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minute reminiscences, some hasty remarks have been recorded, which the maturer judgment of the speaker might, perhaps, not have confirmed. The emphatic records left by Pascal, of his views in writing the Provincial Letters, are, however, very interesting. (*Translator.*)

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# CONVERSATIONS OF PASCAL.

## DISCOURSE
## ON THE CONDITION OF THE GREAT.
### 1652—3.

One of the objects upon which the late M. Pascal had bestowed deep attention, was a scheme for the education of a Prince, in which his aim would have been, to bring him up in a manner suited to the situation in which the providence of God had placed him; and to qualify him, both to fulfil its duties, and to avoid its dangers.

He had been often heard to say, there was no office that he should be more desirous of undertaking than this; and that it was so important, that he would willingly devote his life to its discharge. And, as it was so much his habit to commit to writing the meditations, which from time to time occupied his mind, his friends were surprised to find among his posthumous papers, none that expressly bore upon this subject; although, in a certain sense, it might be considered that all his writings had some reference to it; and none could be found, in their general scope, better adapted to form the mind of a person of the high rank in question, than the collection which has lately appeared.*

* At the time this was written by Nicole, the first edition of the "Thoughts" had just been published.

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It must be supposed, then, either that what he had written on these subjects has been lost, or that, having these thoughts habitually present to his mind, he had unfortunately neglected to commit them to writing. The public, therefore, being, from whatever cause, thus deprived of so great an advantage, it has occurred to a certain individual, who was present on the occasion of three distinct, but short conversations, which Pascal held with a young person of high rank;* but whose highly cultivated mind was capable of entering into the most elevated subjects, to write down what fell from his instructor on those occasions, notwithstanding an interval of seven or eight years† had then elapsed, since the discourses were delivered. Thus, although after so long a period, it cannot be asserted that the exact forms of expression of Pascal are uniformly preserved, yet, so strong was the impression made upon his mind, that he is confident in the accuracy of his recollection of the substance of the discourses; and that he is thus presenting a faithful record of his thoughts and opinions.

These short conversations had for their object, chiefly, to correct three defects, to which persons born to high station are exposed.

The one of these is, an ignorance of themselves; a belief that all the advantages they enjoy are but their dues, and form, as it were, a necessary part of their position; in consequence of which, they are wont to forget their equality, by nature, with the rest of their species.

Another is, so strong a prepossession and conscious-

* The Duke de Roannez, then in his twenty-second or twenty-third year.

† Or rather, nine or ten years, according to Nicole's correction, on his republication of this document in his "Moral Essays."

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ness of their mere external advantages, that they overlook the importance of all other, more intrinsic and valuable qualifications; they become indifferent to the acquisition of these things, and imagine that their rank alone entitles them to universal respect, and has no need of the support of intelligence and virtue.

The third is, the condition of greatness being one of much license, and affording free scope for self-gratification, it is wont to carry its possessors into unseemly excesses, and debasing pleasures; so that, instead of making their high rank subserve the welfare of their fellow-men, they employ it for the purpose of outraging others, and indulging themselves in every species of excess.

These are the defects which M. Pascal had it in view to remedy, in the three discourses which we here present to the reader.

## DISCOURSE I.

In order to attain to a knowledge of your real condition, Sir, I would have you consider it under this representation. Suppose a man to be cast by tempests upon an unknown island, whose inhabitants were at that moment in trouble, owing to the sudden disappearance of their King; and, as he happened to bear a strong resemblance in person and countenance to the lost Sovereign, he is supposed to be actually himself, and is forthwith received, as such, by the whole population. He

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was at first perplexed, what part he ought to act on the occasion; but, speedily resolved to avail himself of the advantage which fortune presented to him. He received, therefore, all the marks of consideration offered to him, and allowed himself at once to be treated by the deceived population as their King.

But, as he was unable to forget his former condition, his reflections were, while receiving the people's homage, that he was not really the Sovereign of whom they were in search, and that the kingdom was no property of his. Thus, a double train of thought occupied his mind: the one, how he was to conduct himself as King; the other, what had been his original state, and by what strange accident he had become a Sovereign. The latter, however, he kept to himself; the former alone, he revealed to others: by the one, he governed the people; by the other, he regulated his own conduct. Now, I would not have you imagine, that it is less an accident that you are in possession of your wealth and distinction, than that the man we have imagined found himself a King. You have no superiority in yourself, and by virtue of your own nature, any more than he. It is to a multitude of chances you owe it, not only that you are the son of a duke, but that you are born into this world at all. Your birth depended upon a marriage,—or rather, upon the marriages of your whole line of ancestors. Whence does the marriage tie arise? From an accidental visit, from a fugitive conversation, from a hundred unforeseen contingencies!

You hold, you will say, your revenues from your ancestors; but is it not the result of numberless accidents,

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that your ancestors acquired, and have retained, the possession of them ?*

Can you suppose it to be by any necessary order of things, that these possessions have been handed down from your ancestors to yourself? Far is this from being the case. That order is founded alone on legislative enactments, originating, perhaps, in the soundest reasons, but none of which assume any natural right on your part to these things.

Had our forefathers thought fit to enact that the possessions, after being enjoyed by your predecessors during life, should revert to the commonwealth after their death, you would have had no ground of complaint.

Thus, then, is the whole title by which you hold your property—not one conferred by natural right, but by human regulation. A different resolve of judgment on the part of those who had the making of laws, might have rendered you poor; and it is only the concurrence of circumstances in which your birth originated, and the accident of laws favourable to your interests, that have put you in possession of all that you enjoy.

I say not, that they do not belong legitimately to you, or that any other could be permitted to take them from you. God, who is the proprietor of all things, has permitted societies to make laws for the distribution of property; and when these laws are once enacted, it becomes a crime to violate them. This constitutes some distinction between your case, and that of the man who

* In Nicole's edition of this Discourse, in his "Moral Essays," he has in this part the following passage:—"A thousand others, as able as themselves, have not been able to gain any such, or have lost them after they were gained."



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obtained his kingdom by the mistake of the people: God had not sanctioned his possession of the sovereignty, and might have compelled him to renounce it; while yours he has sanctioned.

But what assimilates you with him is, that your rights are not founded, any more than his, in any qualification and merit in yourself, by which you obtain a title to them. Your mind and your body might have been indifferently, those of a labourer, or of a duke; and there is no natural superiority in them, that should assign them to the one, rather than to the other.

What is the inference, then, from this?—That you ought, like the man of whom we have been speaking, to entertain a *double* habit of thought; and that, if among men you comport yourself in a manner conformable to your rank, a deeper, but not less true conviction, should suggest, that by nature you possess no advantages over them. If the avowed thought elevate you above the generality of mankind, let the inward reflection humble you, by showing you the perfect equality, in your natural state, between yourself and all your fellow-men.

The crowds who admire you know, perhaps, nothing of the secret. They deem nobility a real elevation; and regard the great as almost of a different species from their own. I bid you not dispossess them of this illusion; but, on the other hand, abuse not your elevation to arrogance; and especially, do not mistake yourself so much as to suppose that you, in reality, possess a nature in any respect different from theirs.

What would you have said, if the man thus installed into royalty by the mistake of the people, had at once

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so far forgotten his former condition, as to fancy the kingdom was his due; that he had obtained it by desert, and enjoyed it of right? You would have marvelled at his ignorance and folly. But is it greater than that of persons of high condition, who fall into so strange a forgetfulness of their natural and original state?

Most important is this caution! Believe me, all the excesses, all the follies, all the outrages of the great, arise from their ignorance of what they really are. Difficult would it be for those who regarded themselves as intrinsically on a level with all men, and were convinced that in themselves they had no claim to those petty advantages which God confers upon them, in preference to others;—difficult, indeed, would it be for such to conduct themselves toward their fellow-men with arrogance. It is those only who forget these things, and believe themselves to possess real advantages over others, that can fall into such conduct; and this is the illusion against which I would now desire to caution you.

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## DISCOURSE II.

It is desirable, Sir, that you should be acquainted, in their proper measure, with your own rights; that you may not fall into the injustice of exacting from others that which is not due from them,—a habit very common among persons of your condition, and arising from an ignorance of their state by nature.

There are in the world two kinds of greatness:—that



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which is external and adventitious, and that which results from endowments of nature. External greatness is dependant upon our fellow-men, who have justly considered respect and homage to be due to certain states and conditions in society. Offices of honour, and noble rank, are of this nature. In one country distinction is paid to aristocrats, in another to commoners; in this, to the elder of a house, in that to the younger. Why is this? Because it is man's will. The matter was, perhaps, one of indifference before the institution arose; afterwards it became a right, and cannot be violated without injustice.

Natural greatness is that which is independent of man's caprices, because it consists in real and effective qualities of the mind, or of the body; which confer their respective kinds of superiority,—such as science, intelligence, virtue, health, strength.

We all owe some consideration to one or the other of these descriptions of greatness; but, as their nature is different, so the degree of our homage to them will differ also. To external greatness we owe the marks of external respect: that is, certain ceremonial observances; which, although properly accompanied with an external conviction of the fitness of the tribute, do not imply any recognition, on our part, of any intrinsic qualities in those whom we thus honour. The Sovereign is addressed on the bended knee; we stand, in the presence-chamber of princes. It is a mark of folly and baseness of spirit, to withhold from them these distinctions. But natural and intrinsic reverence is the due only of natural greatness; and, on the other hand, we justly feel

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contempt and aversion toward qualities opposed to this native superiority.

It is not incumbent upon me, because you are a duke, to esteem you; but it is incumbent upon me to offer you the most respectful salutations. If I see you to be both a duke and a good man, then I render my dues to you in both these characters: I will not withhold from you the ceremony due to your ducal rank, nor the esteem which is due to a good man. But if you were a duke, and not a good man, still I would give you your dues; for, in yielding you the external homage which men agree to assign to your station, I may still retain that inward contempt, which the unworthiness of your character has incurred from me.

This, then, is what constitutes the propriety of these distinctions. Their abuse consists in attaching internal reverence to accidental distinctions; or in claiming adventitious ceremonies as the due of natural eminence. Monsieur N. is a greater geometrician than myself: in that capacity he desires to take precedence of me. I tell him, he understands nothing about the matter. Geometry is a mental accomplishment: it demands the tribute of our respect: but men have not attached to it any external distinctions. Then I am entitled, in society, to precedence over him: but I hold him superior to me as a geometrician. In the same way, if you, because you are a duke and a peer, would not be contented with my standing uncovered before you, but insisted likewise upon my esteeming you, I should ask you to show me those qualities for which you claim my respect. Were you able to do this, it is yours, and I could not withhold

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it with justice. But if you could not do so, the injustice would be on your own side in requiring it; and, assuredly, you would not obtain your demand, even were you the greatest person in the world.

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## DISCOURSE III.

My endeavour is, Sir, to make you acquainted with your true condition in the world; for it is that with which persons in your station are, of all others, the least acquainted.

What is it, in your opinion, to be a great nobleman? It is to be the dispenser of a multitude of those things which are the objects of men's desires; and thus to have the power of satisfying the wants and aims of many of your fellow-men. It is these desires, and these wants, which attract them towards you, and ensure their submission to your authority: without this, they would care nothing for you. But they hope, by means of the services and the deference they render you, to obtain some share of the benefits they seek, and of which they know you to have the bestowal.

Our Maker is surrounded with beings filled with wants, who ask of him those benefits which are at his disposal; therefore he is properly the Sovereign Dispenser of all good. You, in the same way, are surrounded by a small circle, over whom you exercise a like sway. Those persons are filled with desires for objects of sense; they are unceasing in their importunities for sensual

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benefits from you: it is the hope of such benefits that alone procures you their attachment. You, then, are sovereign over their desires. Your realm is indeed of narrow circuit; but, within its limits, you are as absolute as the greatest of potentates, who, like you, are but the sovereigns of sensual desires. It is those desires which constitute their power; that is, the possession of those things which the cupidity of man most affects.

Do you, however, conscious of your true condition, improve the means which it puts in your power, and aim not at any other dominion than that which it confers upon you. It is no influence of your own, no power derived from nature, which subjects these persons to your will.

Dare not, then, to conduct yourself towards them with harshness, nor to sway them by violence. Lay yourself out to satisfy their reasonable desires; alleviate their wants; derive your pleasure from beneficence; promote in every way their welfare: then shall you reign a true Sovereign, amidst a devoted people.

What I am now enjoining upon you amounts not, indeed, to much; and if you *stop* there, you will be a *lost* man! But your ruin will be, at least, not unattended with a measure of repute.

There are some who, like fools, destroy themselves by avarice, by brutality, by licentiousness, by outrages, by blasphemies! The course I open to you is, beyond all doubt, a more seemly one: yet, after all, it is an egregious folly for a man to throw himself away; and therefore you ought by no means to rest at this stage in your progress through life.

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You should despise both sensuality itself, and the sovereignty which it confers upon you; and aspire to that domain whose subjects breathe only virtue, and desire nothing but the benefits which she confers. I leave it to others to point you to her paths; let it suffice me, to have warned you from those grosser ways, in which so many of your rank delight, through mere ignorance of their proper state, and their natural position.

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# CONVERSATIONS OF PASCAL WITH DE SACI, ON EPICTETUS AND MONTAIGNE.

1654.

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* M. PASCAL, about this time, became a resident at Port Royal des Champs. I do not pause here to give an account of a man, who was the admiration not only of France, but of all Europe.

His mind, full of fervour and energy, possessed a comprehensiveness, an elevation, a strength, a penetration, an elegance, almost beyond the power of conception. There was not a man of eminence in mathematical studies, who could come up to him: witness the history of the celebrated "*Roulette*," which was the admiration of the whole scientific world in his day. He knew how to impart animation to lifeless *copper*, and intelligence to the insensibility of *brass*. By this invention,† we saw a few small and inanimate wheels, on which were fixed the ten primal numbers, give answers to intelligent beings. He could, so to say, cause dumb machines to speak; solving, in a pastime, intricate numerical questions, which had perplexed the most scientific: all which

* This introduction, it will be remembered, is attributed to Fontaine, the Secretary of Saci. (Transl.)

† His "Calculating Machine." Mem., "Provincial Letters," p. 52. (Transl.)



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cost him such intense labour, and such exhaustion of mind, that the completing of this extraordinary machine —which I myself have seen, and which excited universal admiration—almost unsettled his own mind for a period of three years.

This remarkable man, becoming after this a subject of Divine grace, yielded his lofty intellect to the gentle sway of his Redeemer; and his mighty spirit became the seat of humility and penitence.

He repaired to Paris, for the purpose of committing himself to the spiritual guidance of M. Singlin; and determined to shape his future course by his direction. M. Singlin saw that the best way to deal with a genius such as his, was to send him to the Port Royal des Champs, where M. Arnauld would supply the required curb in regard to his pursuit of other branches of knowledge, and M. de Saci would teach him to hold them in their due subordination.

He became thus an inmate of Port Royal. M. de Saci could not avoid seeing him, especially after having been solicited to do so by M. Singlin; but the sacred interest which he felt in the study of the Scriptures and the Fathers, led him to hope that he should not be too greatly dazzled by all the brilliant qualities of M. Pascal, which, however, were the charm and admiration of the world. He found in the result he could approve of all his sentiments. He acknowledged with pleasure the force of his conversation; but he had nothing to learn from it. All the elevated sentiments that fell from Pascal, he had before found in St. Augustin; and, as his habit was to do justice to every one, he said, "M. Pascal is much to

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be admired in that, not having read the Fathers of the church, he should have himself discovered, by the penetration of his superior genius, the self-same truths which they have put forth." "He regards them with surprise," he said, "because he had never met with them before; but as for ourselves, we are accustomed to find similar things continually in our books." Thus this matured theologian, finding that the ancients were not possessed of less clear views than their successors, continued to adhere to them; while he esteemed M. Pascal the more, on finding him in all points in accordance with St. Augustin.

M. de Saci's habit in conversation with various descriptions of persons was, to adapt his topics to their several tastes and pursuits. If he met with M. Hamon, he conversed with him upon medicine. When he fell in with the surgeon of the establishment, he asked him questions respecting surgery. Gardeners, vine-dressers, farmers, all contributed to him their share of information; while their various topics served to lead him to God, and furnished him with opportunities to direct the thoughts of those he conversed with to Him also. He thus deemed it right to put Pascal likewise upon his strong points, and to converse with him upon literature and philosophy, which were his leading tastes; and he consequently brought forward these subjects in their earliest conversations. M. Pascal told him, that his two most familiar books had been Epictetus and Montaigne; and indulged in high encomiums upon these two writers. M. de Saci, who had thought it his duty to read but little of these authors, encouraged Pascal to enter into

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detail on the subject of their writings: and the following was his discourse.—

"Epictetus," he began, "is one of those worldly philosophers who show the largest acquaintance with the duties of man. He enforces upon him, above all things, to consider God as the supreme object of his regard; to establish himself in a conviction of the perfect justice of all his dealings; and heartily to submit to and follow his will in all things, as one who orders all events with the greatest wisdom. 'By the exercise of such dispositions,' he says, 'he will find all complaints and murmurs silenced, and his mind become inured to acquiesce calmly in all the vicissitudes of life, even the most painful.' 'Never say,' he proceeds, 'I have lost such a thing: say rather, I have given it back:—my son is dead; I have given him back:—my wife is dead; I have given her back. Let this be your rule also with regard to property, and all other things. Yet he who deprives me of them is guilty, you will say? But why disturb yourself about the mere instrument, by which He who lent you these things claims them again?

"'While you are permitted the enjoyment of them, hold them as goods belonging rather to another than to yourself,—in the same way that a traveller regards things while sojourning at an Inn.' 'You ought not,' he says again, 'to desire that the course of events shall be conformed to your mere pleasure; but you should be pleased that they are as they are.' 'Ever remember,' he continues, 'that you are placed here as an actor; and play your part in the drama, as it pleases the manager to direct. It is your business to remain on the stage as

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long as he chooses; to act the character of rich or poor, just as he appoints. It is your duty to sustain your part well; but, to allot that part is another's. Keep death, and the calamities incidental to life, ever before your eyes; think nothing that befalls you derogatory to you; and indulge no exorbitant desires.'—He gives man numberless precepts for the discharge of duty; he enjoins him to be humble, to conceal his good resolutions, especially at the outset of life; and to carry them out in secret: nothing is more fatal than to blaze such good intentions abroad. He never ceases to inculcate, that all the endeavour, and all the desire of man, should be to ascertain and follow the will of God.

"These, Sir," said Pascal to M. de Saci, "are the precepts given by this illustrious genius, this eminent proficient in philosophy, for the discharge of man's duties. I venture to say, he would have been worthy of our highest admiration had he been equally versed in human impotence; but it is the attribute of God only, to be the instructor of man in both these respects. A mere creature of the dust,—observe how, with so clear an apprehension of what we ought to do, he loses himself in speculating upon what we are *capable* of doing. He says that God has given to men the means of discharging every duty; that those means are always in our own power; that we ought never to expect happiness except from sources which are under our own control, since God has given them to us for that purpose; that we ought to ascertain what are the objects within our choice and will:—riches, life, worldly reputation, are not at our own disposal, and do not lead

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us to God; that the mind cannot be compelled to believe what it knows to be false; nor the will to take pleasure in that which causes unhappiness: that these two agencies, then, are absolutely free; and by their means alone we attain to perfection: by them we may learn perfectly to know God, to love, to obey, to please Him; to cure ourselves of all vice, to attain to all virtues; to acquire absolute holiness; and to render ourselves fit for companionship with the Eternal himself.

"These principles—the inspiration of human pride and diabolical influence—lead to others equally erroneous; such as that the soul is a portion of the Deity; that suffering and pain are no evils; that we are at liberty to destroy ourselves, when under such troubles, as that we may suppose God is calling us away; and others.

"Now, with respect to Montaigne, Sir, of whom you are desirous I should give you my opinion.—Having had his birth in a Christian country, he was in possession of the Catholic religion, and, in that respect, furnished no matter for especial remark. But we see in him an endeavour to found a system of morality upon mere reason, without the light of faith; and he consequently adapts all his principles to that theory. Assuming man to be destitute of a revelation, he reasons in the following manner.—He throws all things into doubt, and that so general and so universal, that even the doubt questions and cavils at itself; and men, becoming doubtful even of their doubts, their incertitudes run a perpetual and untiring circle, opposing equally the position, that every thing is uncertain, and that nothing is so. As for him, however, he will be sure of nothing. It is in this doubt,

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which is doubtful of itself, and this ignorance which is ignorant of itself, that consists the substance of Montaigne's opinions, which he professes to be unable to express by any positive terms. For, if he says he doubts, he betrays himself by at least asserting that he *does* doubt; which being opposed to his system, he can only resort to interrogations to explain himself.—Not choosing, for instance, to say, 'I know not,' he will say, 'What do I know?' Thence, he adopts for his device the scales of a balance, each of which weighing against the other, they settle into a perfect equilibrium: in this way he becomes, in fact, a pure pyrrhonist. This principle runs through all his writings; his 'Essays' revolve upon the same doctrine; and it is his constant aim to establish it, although he does not always let his object be perceived. By these means he insensibly undermines all that is regarded as certain among men;—not with the view to establish the contrary with any measure of certitude, (to which he is opposed,) but solely to show that, probabilities on both sides being balanced, it is impossible to settle our belief upon either the one or the other.

"In this spirit he mocks at all certainties. He opposes, for instance, those who expected to establish in France an effectual remedy for litigation, by the multitude, and the pretended equity of the laws; as if it were possible to root out those uncertainties which are the source of litigation, and to construct legal barriers that shall stop the flow of doubts, and dam up conjectural interpretations! Thus, when he says he would just as willingly submit his cause to the first person that should pass by, as to all the state judges; he does not

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pretend to say the order of jurisprudence should be altered:—he has no such ambition as that; nor that he could propose anything better himself: he sees no more good in the one scheme than the other.

"His intention is only to show the vanity of all, even the most received opinions; proving that the abolition of all laws would tend more to the diminution of differences than their multiplication,—because doubts are augmented in proportion to the efforts made to remove them: that obscurities multiply with the number of commentaries; and that the surest way to understand a discourse is, not to examine deeply into it, but to take up with our first impression of its meaning,—inasmuch as the more it is scrutinized, the more its clearness will be lost. Thus he passes his random judgment on all the actions of men, and all the events of history,—sometimes after one fashion, and sometimes after another; ever following his first and superficial views, and subjecting them to none of the severer deductions of reason. Fond of showing, by his own example, the bold contrarieties which may exist in the mind of genius, he is indifferent whether to engage in controversies or not: having always, in one way or the other, the means of exposing the fallacy of opinions; and deriving such advantage from this system of universal scepticism, that he shows himself equally strong in his triumphs and his defeats.

"It is in this philosophical posture,—this easy chair of indifference, wavering and unstable as it is,—that he combats with invincible force the heretics of his time, upon the ground of their presumptuous pretences, that they alone understand the true meaning of Scripture;

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and thence he also denounces the flagrant impiety of those who impugn the existence of God. He especially grapples with these persons in the apology of Raimond de Sébonde; and, finding them to have deprived themselves voluntarily of all the aids of revelation, to have taken for their guide only the light of nature, and to have thrown overboard all evidence of facts, he interrogates them as to the authority by which they presume to judge of that Sovereign Being whose attribute is Infinitude;—they, who know nothing with certainty of the very simplest phenomena of nature!

"He asks them, where are their principles? He presses them to produce them. He examines all those that they pretend to adduce; and, with surprising skill and sagacity, shows the futility of such as pass among them for the clearest and best established. He demands—Does the soul know anything at all? Does it know itself? Is it something substantive, or adventitious? is it body or spirit? What, then, are these several things? and is there nothing that can be classed indifferently under these several heads? Does it know its own body; does it know what matter is; and can it distinguish one body from another, amidst the innumerable variety which exist?

"How does it reason, if it be matter? If immaterial, how can it be united to any particular body, and partake of its passions? When did its existence commence?—with the body or without?

"Does it end with it or not? does it never deceive itself? does it know when it errs, seeing the essence of error is in not knowing it to be such? In its ignorance, does it

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not, for instance, as firmly believe that *two and three* make six, as that they make five? Do animals reason, think, speak? Who is to decide what is time; what are space and extent; what motion, what unity?—all of these being things that surround us, and yet are utterly inexplicable.

"What again are health, sickness, death, life, evil, justice, sin?—things of which we are every day talking. Have we in ourselves any principles of truth? and are those which we most generally receive, and those which we call *axioms*, or notions common to all men, conformable to essential truth? And since we know only by means of faith, that a Being, all goodness, in forming us for the knowledge of truth, has given us these genuine principles; who could tell, without such an illumination, that, ourselves being mere creatures of chance, our ideas are not entirely uncertain; or, on the other hand, that we were not created by some base and malignant being, and inspired by him with false principles and ideas, for our destruction? Thus he shows that God, and truth, are inseparable; and that if the one *is* or *is not*,—is *certain* or *uncertain*,—the other is necessarily the same.

"Who knows, he further inquires, whether the standard which we ordinarily use for judging of truth, has been destined to that purpose by him who is its Author? Who, again, can tell what truth is? and how can any one be certain of possessing it, if he knows not what it is? Who even knows what *being* is?—as it is impossible to define it; as nothing is more indeterminate; and as, in order to explain it, we are obliged to avail ourselves of the idea of *being*, saying *it is* such or such a thing. And

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as we know not what are *soul, body, time, space, motion, truth, good,* or even *being;* nor can explain our own ideas of these things; how can we be certain that they are the same in other men; seeing we have no other proof of it than the uniformity of results, which is not always a proof of identity of principles; for these may often be very different, and yet lead to the same conclusions, every one knowing that truth may often be evolved from falsehood?

"Montaigne also profoundly investigates all the sciences:—geometry,—endeavouring to prove uncertainty in its axioms, and in many of its terms, which are not definable, such as *space, motion,* &c.;—physics, and medicine,—which he disparages in various ways;—history, political science, morals, jurisprudence, and the rest.

"So that, according to him, apart from revelation, we might believe life to be a mere dream, from which we awake only at death, and during which we experience as little reality and truth as in sleep.

"Thence it is, that he chastises, with so much force and severity, reason dissociated from faith: actually questioning if it be reasonable; and if animals be not equally so, or more or less so than men: thus bringing this vaunted reason down from its eminence, and putting it on a level with brutish instinct; nor permitting it to claim exemption from the rank he assigns to it, unless it can prove a revelation from the Creator himself of a prerogative, of which, by its own efforts, it is ignorant; threatening, if it be dissatisfied with his treatment, to place it in the lowest of all ranks, which he maintains it to be in his power to do; and conceding to it no power at

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all, except to acknowledge its weakness with unfeigned humility, instead of swelling with impotent vanity!"

M. de Saci heard all this with surprise, and seemed as if he was listening to a new language; while he said to himself in the words of St. Augustin, "O God of truth! dost thou then take pleasure in those who are versed in these subtilties of reasoning?" He then censured this philosophy, which pricked and wounded itself in every part with the thorns of its own creation, as St. Augustin says of himself, when in the same state of mind. After listening patiently to the foregoing remarks, he said to M. Pascal, "I am obliged to you, Sir: I feel that if I had studied Montaigne ever so deeply, I could not know him better than I do now, after this conversation. He ought, methinks, to wish* to be known only through such accounts as you furnish of his writings; and he might say with St. Augustin, '*Ibi me vides, attende.*' I have no doubt that this man possessed genius; but I question whether you do not endow him with a little more than he had from nature, by your ingenious development of his principles. You may well suppose that, passing such a life as I have done, it would have been of little advantage to me to study this writer, whose works possess none of those qualities which, according to St. Augustin, we ought chiefly to affect in our reading; seeing his sentiments have no foundation in humility and Christian piety, and tend to

* This expression "ought to wish," (*devrait souhaiter,*) is remarkable in speaking of an author so long dead: perhaps the ingenious Fontaine has himself put it into the mouth of De Saci.

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the overthrow of all knowledge, and consequently of religion itself.

"This is the very thing with which this learned and holy man reproached the philosophers of old times, who were then called Academicians; and whose aim it was to throw everything into uncertainty and doubt. Now, what occasion was there for Montaigne to exercise his wit, by renewing a system which rightly passes among Christians for mere folly? If it is to be alleged in his defence, that in all he says he sets aside revelation, we, who enjoy a revelation, ought to set aside all that he says. I do not object to Montaigne's wit, which is indeed a great gift from God; but he ought to have improved it by devoting it to God's service, and not that of the devil! What is the benefit of a talent so ill employed? You, Sir, are happy in your superiority over the sophistries of these wits,—intoxicated with redundance of learning, yet with hearts destitute of the truth! God has, by his gracious attractions, led your mind to better satisfactions than those which you find in Montaigne. He has called you from these dangerous pleasures,—'*à jucunditate pestiferâ*,' as St. Augustin calls them, when he gives thanks to God for pardoning the sin he had committed in indulging in such vanities. St. Augustin is herein the more to be credited, as he had before held different views; and, as you say of Montaigne, that he combated the heretics of his time by this universality of doubt, so was it by the same scepticisms of the Academicians that he was led to quit the Manichean heresy. No sooner did he give himself up to God, than he renounced this sacrilegious vanity. He saw the

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wisdom of St. Paul in warning us against the seductions of these sophistries. For he acknowledges that there is in them an almost irresistible attraction, and an eloquence that stands in the stead of truth. They are dangerous viands, he says, served up with the most enticing garnish; but it is food which starves, instead of nourishing the heart. 'Those who feed on them are like sleepers, who dream they are eating; but the imaginary repast leaves them more empty than they were before.'"

M. de Saci made some further remarks of the same kind, on which Pascal said, if he complimented him on his knowledge of Montaigne, and his just appreciation of his sentiments, he could, without any compliment say, that M. de Saci was still more acquainted with, and better appreciated St. Augustin, although it was little to the advantage of poor Montaigne. Pascal seemed much edified with the weightiness of M. de Saci's views, but was still full of his author; and thus continued:—

"I confess, Sir, that I cannot but be pleased to see in this writer, the pride of reason so thoroughly baffled by its own weapons, and by that fierce contention of man against man, which, from a companionship with God, to which he had aspired by the aid alone of his feeble reason, hurls him down to an equality with the perishing brutes; and I should have heartily loved the instrument by which so signal a triumph was achieved, if, with the humility of a faithful disciple of the church, he had sought, by the rules of a pure morality, to induce those whom he had brought to this salutary humiliation, not to irritate, by renewed offences, Him who alone can

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preserve them from these crimes, of whose heinousness he had proved they could not even be aware.

" But, instead of this, his procedure is that of a mere heathen. On this very principle, he says, that, apart from revelation, all is uncertainty; and, seeing how universally men are seeking truth and happiness, without making any approach towards them, he concludes—for his part—those who will may concern themselves about these matters! As for him, it is quite enough to keep the mind at ease, and to skim lightly over these subjects, lest he should get beyond his depth. 'Let us take up,' he says, 'with truth and happiness as they lie on the surface, and not push them to too close a demonstration, lest they slip through our fingers.' For these reasons, he contents himself with the mere evidence of the senses, and the most common-place notions, because he finds it too much trouble to refute them; and, in his ignorance of actual truth, knows not whether he should be a gainer by doing so or not. Thus, he shrinks from pain and death, because instinct compels him to do so; and, for the same reason, he professes not to resist these evils,—yet, without coming to the conclusion that they are real; not placing too much reliance upon these natural emotions of fear,—seeing we are conscious in ourselves of pleasurable instincts also, which are equally charged with criminality, although nature (as he alleges) pleads the contrary. Thus he concludes, 'I preserve a happy moderation in my deportment; I do as other people do; and what they do, in a mistaken fancy that they are pursuing true happiness, I do from a different principle, which is, that—probabilities on both sides being balanced

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—example and convenience are the counterpoises of my conduct.

"Thence, under the influence of custom, he follows the manners of his country. He rides his horse, because the horse allows him to do it; but without knowing whether he ought to do so, or whether the horse has not an equal right to make use of him. He constrains also his inclination to avoid certain vices, and preserve fidelity to the marriage bond, on account of the inconvenience caused by irregularity; the rule of life with him, in every thing, being convenience and tranquillity. He utterly repudiates that stoical virtue, which is wont to be delineated with severe aspect, with wrinkled brow, and bristling locks, holding herself silent and aloof from man and his sympathies;—a bug-bear, as he calls it, fit only to frighten children, and whose only effort is fruitlessly to follow after peace, but never to attain it.

"His wisdom, on the contrary, is facile, simple, pleasant, cheerful, and gamesome; it consists in following the humour of the moment, and toying carelessly with the accidents, whether good or evil, of life; in reposing peacefully on the bosom of an easy indolence; and thus evincing to men, amidst their laborious efforts for happiness, that true peace is alone to be found in this state of quietude; and that ignorance and incuriousness are (to use his own expressions) the softest pillows for a well-constituted mind."

"I cannot conceal from you," added M. Pascal, "that this writer and Epictetus appear to me, beyond question, the most powerful champions of the two most important sects among the infidel world;—the only classes, in fact,

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of those destitute of the light of religion, whose principles are in any measure consistent with themselves. What, in truth, should be done without a revelation, but to follow one or other of these systems?

"As for the first,—there is a God: then he has created man; he has formed him for himself; and made him such as he is, that he should do what is right, and enjoy happiness. Man is then capable of ascertaining truth, and raising himself, by his own understanding, to God, his sovereign good.

"Then for the second,—man cannot elevate himself to God: his inclinations oppose His laws; he is prone to seek his happiness in things of sense, and those even the most criminal in their nature. All then seems uncertainty,—not even excepting the question, in what our true happiness consists: we have no fixed rule in morals, nor certainty in knowledge. I have been much interested in observing, among these opposite reasoners, the points upon which either of them have discovered any measure of that truth which they were exploring. For, if it is pleasing to observe in nature the desire she evinces to delineate traces and faint representations of God in all his works; how much more striking is it to contemplate (as has been my practice in the study of the productions of the mind) their efforts to arrive at truth, even when they are wandering the furthest from it; and to remark in what points they attain to, and in what they deviate from it.

"It is true, Sir, you have admirably proved to me the little need that Christians have of these philosophical disquisitions. Yet, premising that I hold myself prepared to renounce all illumination which has not its



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source in God,—the alone author of assured truth,—permit me a little further to unfold to you my thoughts upon the matter before us. It appears to me, that the source of error among the Stoics on one side, and the Epicureans on the other, is their ignorance that the state of man, at present, differs from that in which he was created. Thus, the one of these sects seeing in him some traces of his original greatness, and unconscious of his corruption, has treated his nature as if it were a healthy one, and needed no repair;—all which tends to foster in him an overweening pride. The other, on the contrary, conscious of his present misery, and knowing nothing of his original excellence, treat man's nature as irretrievably infirm, and incapable of improvement; and this plunges him into an utter laxity, and a despair of ever attaining to true happiness. Thus these two conditions of man, which ought to be taken in combination with each other in order to lead to truth, are viewed in disjunction, and unavoidably lead to one of these two evils,—pride, or sensuality. In these vices men are invariably immersed, previous to the reception of Divine grace. Finding no remedy for their disorders in inertness, they seek to extricate themselves by vanity; and are thus, in the one way or the other, ever led captive by the spirits of evil, who are worshipped, as St. Augustin says, in many different ways.

"From this imperfect measure of information, then, it arises, that the one sect, knowing only the impotence of man, and not his duties, fall into laxness; and the other, knowing his duties, but not his impotence, wrap themselves up in pride. Whence it would seem that if the two

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were united, they would form a perfect moral system. But, instead of this compact, we see them in a state of perpetual opposition and conflict: the one standing upon certainty, and the other upon doubt; the one upon the greatness of man, the other upon his feebleness;—there can be no harmony and unison between them. Thus they are unable to subsist alone, on account of their deficiencies; or to unite, on account of the contrariety of their views; and they must, therefore, wound and destroy each other, in order to give place to the truth of the Gospel. *That* it is, which, by a Divine process, reconciles all these contradictions: itself the perfection of truth, without any mixture of error, it inculcates that real, that celestial wisdom, in which are seen to harmonize principles the most opposed to each other, and which would be incompatible in mere human systems. And the reason of this is, that these worldly instructors have introduced contradictions into the same subject; the one attributing power, and the other feebleness, to our nature,—qualities which cannot subsist together: while, on the other hand, faith teaches us to assign these tendencies to different things;—infirmity to human nature, but power to grace. This is that new and astonishing combination, which it was the prerogative of the Almighty alone to reveal; which only His power could achieve; and which is nothing but a type, as it is the effect, of the ineffable union of the two natures in the one person of the God-Man!

"I ought to apologize, Sir," said Pascal to M. de Saci, "for venturing thus, in your presence, into the precincts of Theology, instead of confining myself, as I should



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do, to the limits of philosophical inquiry. But my subject has insensibly beguiled me into them, and it is difficult, whatever class of truths are under discussion, to avoid that of Theology, seeing it is the centre of all truths; a fact strikingly evident here, inasmuch as it must be regarded as including all those that are contained in these several opinions. I know not, therefore, how any of the supporters of these conflicting opinions can refuse to yield to its influence. If they are filled with thoughts of the greatness of man, how far do their conceptions fall below the revelations of the Gospel; which show that a price no less than the death of a GOD has been paid for him! And if their inclination be, to contemplate rather the infirmities of our nature, their ideas still come short of the actual misery of sin, for which that death is alone seen to be a remedy. Thus, all find their own views realized; and, what is more worthy of admiration, these contending parties find in those great truths a point of union, which any other would have been at an infinite distance from affording them."

M. de Saci could not forbear expressing to his friend his surprise at the happy way in which he had established his position. He confessed, at the same time, that it was not every one who, like him, could deduce from these studies such wise and elevated conclusions. He told him, he resembled those skilful physicians, who know how to compound the most salutary medicines from poisonous ingredients. He added, that, although he plainly saw, from all that had passed, that his readings of these

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authors had been of service to himself, he, nevertheless, could not think they would be advantageous to the generality of persons, whose minds were not sufficiently acute to study such writers with due discrimination, and to extract the pearls from the rubbish; but rather inhaled, as from a dunghill, the noxious fumes which tended to obscure and destroy their feeble and glimmering faith. On that account, his advice to such persons was, not lightly to expose themselves to such influences, lest they themselves should share the ruin of these infidel reasoners, and become, like them, "the prey of demons and the food of worms," according to the solemn denunciations of Holy Scriptures.

"As to the usefulness of such reading," replied M. Pascal, "I will tell you frankly my opinion. I find in Epictetus an incomparable method of disturbing the tranquillity of those who seek their happiness in external objects,—forcing them to see their blindness and degradation, and making them feel that they will never find a remedy for the errors and the grief they are endeavouring to escape, till *they give themselves unreservedly to God alone.** Montaigne, again, is admirable in demolishing the pride of those who, without seeking the aid of faith, pique themselves upon the observance of moral rectitude; in disabusing those who follow their opinions, and fancy they can find, in human science, that impregnable Truth, which centres only in the existence and the perfection of

* It is impossible to forbear pausing for a moment to point attention to this fine sentiment of Pascal, constituting as it does, the very sum and substance of all true religion. (Transl.)

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God; and in so thoroughly demonstrating the insufficiency and erroneousness of human reason, as to make it difficult, after the exposure, to reject the mysteries of faith, on the ground of their repugnance to so fallible a guide. The mind of man comes out, indeed, so prostrated under his processes, that it is little disposed further to question the *possibility* of these mysteries, which is the common resource of reasoners of an inferior order.

"But if Epictetus thus rouses man from indolence, he instigates him also to pride; in which he may prove very injurious to those, who are not convinced of the corruption of all rectitude which does not proceed from faith. And Montaigne is absolutely ruinous to all, who have a tendency to impiety and vice.

"The study of both, therefore, ought to be regulated with much care and discretion; and with an especial regard to the dispositions and propensities of those who enter upon them. I would only say, it appears to me that, in joining them together, there might be no harm done, because the evil of one tends to neutralize that of the other. They cannot inspire virtue, but they may serve to disturb vice; the man will thus find himself combated by antagonist influences, the one opposing his pride, and the other his indolence; and may be prevented from resting in any of these or similar vices, although unable to avoid them all."

It was in this way, that these two able men came to similar conclusions on the subject of the studies of these philosophers; and, though traversing different routes, met at the same point of junction: De Saci having

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reached it at once, by his clear views of religion; and Pascal's progress towards it having been taken by the more circuitous path, of an early attachment to philosophical studies.

M. de Saci, and the whole community of Port Royal, were thus filled with joy at the change of views in Pascal. They saw in it with admiration a proof of the omnipotence of that Grace, which, in the exercise of a compassion almost without parallel, had profoundly abased and subdued to itself a mind so eminent in itself, and once so confident in its own powers!

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# DETACHED CONVERSATIONS AND REMARKS.

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## NARRATIVE OF DISCOURSES WHICH I HEARD FROM MY UNCLE, M. PASCAL, NOT ADDRESSED TO ME, BUT TO OTHER PERSONS, FRIENDS OF HIS, IN MY PRESENCE. I WAS THEN ABOUT SIXTEEN AND A HALF YEARS OF AGE.*

"FIRST.—They ask me whether I regret having published the 'Provincial Letters.' I reply, that so far from regretting, if it were now to be done again, I should do it, and with yet more force.

"Second.—I am asked again, why I named all the authors whence I gathered all the abominable propositions which I have quoted. I replied, that if I were in a town where there were twelve fountains, and I knew certainly that one of them was poisoned, I should feel it a duty to warn every one not to draw water from that fountain; and as it might be supposed to be a mere fancy on my part, I should be compelled to name the one that was poisoned, rather than expose the whole town to danger.

* Third Collection MS. of Père Guerrier, p. 260.

This narrative is by Marguerite Perier. This young lady was born in 1646; the conversation here related by her took place in 1662, a short time before Pascal's death. The same account is also given in the MS. of the "*Oratoire*," but it is less correct.

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"Third.—I have been asked why I employed raillery, and a light and jocose style. I reply, that if I had written dogmatically, my papers would have been only read by the learned, and those who had no need of the information I furnished, seeing they knew as much as myself; therefore I thought it right to compose my letters in such a way that they might be read by females, and by people of the world; and might thus show the danger of those maxims and principles, which were spreading in every direction, and to which people were giving such easy credit.

"Fourth.—I have been further asked, whether I have myself read all the works which I have quoted. I say no: I should in such case have consumed my whole life in reading very *bad books;* but I have twice over read the whole of Escobar's writings, and all the others I have had read by my friends; and I have not adduced a single passage without reading it myself in the book quoted, and examining the subject upon which it treats, and the entire context, both preceding and following; that I might not chance to quote an objection for a reply, which would have been justly made a matter of reproach."

*(Note of P. Guerrier.)* "I have copied this from a Manuscript in the hand-writing of Madlle. M. Perier."

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The Abbé Pascal, who died some years since, relates having once heard the famous Pascal say on the subject of the Port Royal Logic,—"M. Arnauld engaged on



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Logic: a suitable occupation indeed! The wants of the *Church* require all his labours."*

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"Wise persons . . . . avoid public notice and individual recognition, and endeavour rather to conceal themselves in the crowd, that nothing may be seen in their discourses but the simple truths which they enforce."

The late M. Pascal, who knew as much of the art of pure rhetoric as any man that ever lived, carried this rule so far as to maintain that a right-thinking man ought to avoid naming himself, or using the words, "*I*" and "*me*;" and he was in the habit of saying upon this subject,

"'Christian piety annihilates self in man, and human refinement aims to hide and suppress it.'"†

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Pascal spoke little on scientific subjects; yet, when occasion offered, he expressed his opinions on the current topics of conversation. For instance, on the subject of Descartes' philosophy, he spoke his mind: he agreed with him on the "*Automate*;" he differed entirely on his "*Matière subtile*," and made it the subject of ridicule:

* Extract from 1st Coll. MS. of P. Guerrier, p. 335. (French Editor.)
This remark was perhaps thrown out in haste, and forgotten. Pascal was too rife a scholar himself, to undervalue the literary labours with which the Port Royalists gracefully relieved their controversial toils, and Arnauld's enormous volumes amply prove that he found time for almost every species of mental occupation.—See Mem. Arnauld; Appendix Provin. Letters. (Transl.)

† Port Royal Logic, 3d. part, Chap. XIX.

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but he could by no means endure his mode of explaining the formation of all things; and frequently remarked,

"I cannot forgive Descartes; he would have wished, in the whole of his philosophical system, to dispense with God; he could not, however, help giving him a *chiquenaude* to put the world in motion: after that he could find nothing for God to do." *

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The late M. Pascal, when he wished to give an instance of a mere chimera, which yet made its way by the infatuation of its followers, usually mentioned Descartes' opinion on matter and space.†

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He strenuously opposed the insurrectionary movements in Paris, and was always accustomed to denounce, as mere pretexts, the reasons with which the rebellion was attempted to be excused: he said that,—

"In a state of settled republican form, like Venice, it would be a positive wrong to attempt to set up the kingly authority, and to circumscribe the liberties which God has conferred upon the people. But, in a country in which the royal power has been established, no one can violate the reverence due to the Sovereign without a kind of sacrilege; because, the sovereignty which God has attached to it being not only an image of, but a participation in the power of God,—this cannot be opposed without a

* Marg. Perier, 2d Coll. MS. of P. Guerrier, p. 177.

† Nicole, Letter 82. Essays on Morals.

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manifest resistance of the divine ordinances. Furthermore, civil war, which is the natural result of such resistance, being one of the greatest evils which can befall society, it is impossible to exaggerate the enormity of the crime. The early Christians never encouraged revolt, but inculcated patience upon their followers, when earthly princes failed in duty to their subjects."

He was accustomed to say,—

That he entertained as great an abhorrence of this crime as of assassination, or highway robbery; and that there was no offence more repugnant to his inclination, or to which he ever felt less temptation.

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He remarked that the Scripture was not a system addressed to the intellect, but to the heart; it was only intelligible to the right-minded, and all others found in it nothing but obscurity.

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He sometimes exclaimed,—

"Were my heart as much humbled as my understanding, I should be happy; for I am deeply convinced that poverty is a great means of salvation."

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He rejected no applications for alms, although he might be obliged to give out of his own necessities; for his property was small, and his infirm health subjected him to expenses beyond his means. But when he was

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remonstrated with upon the excess of his charities, he was displeased, and would reply,—

"I have always remarked one thing: that the poorest person leaves something behind at death."

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In the extremity of his sufferings, when those about him were expressing their concern on his account, he thus spoke:—

"Distress not yourselves for me: sickness is the natural condition of the Christian, because he is then in the state in which he ought ever to be,—one of endurance of evil, and of privation of good and the pleasures of sense. He is exempt from all those passions which agitate us throughout our mortal existence; without ambition, without avarice; in a state of continual waiting for death. Is it not thus that Christians ought ever to pass through life? And is it not a great blessedness to find ourselves, through necessity, in that state in which we ever ought to be; and when nothing is left to us but humble and patient submission? Therefore it is that I ask for nothing, but that God would bestow this grace upon me!"

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# THOUGHTS

ON

# THE JESUITS AND THE JANSENISTS.

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# THOUGHTS AND NOTES

ON THE

# PROVINCIAL LETTERS.

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# EDITORIAL NOTICES.

THE following section, in which we have collected a multitude of fragments and notes relating to the memorable contest in which Pascal engaged with the Jesuits, may properly be considered as an Appendix to the Provincial Letters.

The greater number of these fragments are extracted from the autograph MS. It was with a feeling of the liveliest curiosity that we traced, for the first time, these sketches of thought heretofore almost unknown;—these hasty suggestions and first inspirations of genius, soon about to be incorporated in the master-piece of our literature. Faithful to our design of preserving, with a religious care, the very minutest relic of this great mind, we have not scrupled, in the following pages, to present to the reader even the most rudimental of these sketches.

These notes possess, further, an historical interest; inasmuch as they prove that Pascal, in writing those letters, was not, as has been pretended by some, the mere instrument for carrying out the conceptions of others. They prove with what care he studied for himself the doctrines which he denounced: they sound in our ears, as it were, the first cries of his offended conscience against their enormities. The members of Port Royal,—especially Arnauld,—assisted him in his researches, made useful suggestions, and furnished some materials; and therefore it is that we find, among the fragments, a page of quotations in Arnauld's hand-writing, with annotations by Pascal. But if the latter found, in his communions with Port Royal, the occasion for his great work, and was supplied there with some of the documents that he needed, his eloquence was the fruit of his own deep convictions, no less than of his immortal powers. (*French Editor.*)

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THE interesting remarks before cited almost supersede those topics, in reference to the papers now about to be furnished, which might have suggested themselves to the mind of the Translator. We seem, indeed, by means of these notes, and yet more, perhaps, by the copious section which follows, entitled, "Thoughts and Notes for the Provincials," brought into the workshop, or (if the figure be more appropriate) the laboratory of the mind; and admitted to the secret processes by which the materials of a great work are collected, and moulded into form and symmetry.

These collections furnish, also, a striking proof of the extent to which Pascal was accustomed to meditate upon the subjects on which his mind was engaged, up to the period when it kindled into elaborate composition. It is, at the same time, pleasing to consider, that his habit of committing to paper even the most imperfect of these reflections, has, (as was before remarked,) in some degree, compensated for the inability for more lengthened writing, which his increasing infirmities progressively induced.

We see here also an instance of the large amount of labour and care which this eminent writer bestowed upon his more finished compositions. It is by such means, indeed, and such only, that the master-pieces of literature have, at all times, been produced. There have been some gifted minds, which have, more than others, possessed the power of mental elaboration of their great conceptions, before they were given forth to the world; and their first thoughts have therefore required little subsequent improvement. Others, whether from inclination, habit, or an inaptitude for a continuous meditation, have produced their ideas—as the painter dashes off a hasty sketch—in a less digested state; and the perfection afterwards attained has been the result only of multiplied revisions. But, by whatever methods those fine compositions have been achieved, deep thought, and persevering labour, (however sedulously disguised, and unseen,) are the law of their production; and none who seek exemption from such law must ever hope for literary eminence. Whether by the silent process of meditation, or by often repeated correction, (the requisite

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mental power for the production of a great work being presupposed,) the minuter graces of composition have ever to be supplied,—the finer touches, the softer shades, and the richer hues, to be worked in,—before it can be a candidate for general approval, and, still less, aspire to the suffrages of posterity. Time should be allowed, that the fondness for a first conception may subside; the rudeness of hasty thought must be redressed; the luxuriances of fancy pruned, redundancies corrected, harshness of diction softened down, expression heightened to brilliancy and point. It is needless to repeat here the numberless transcriptions to which, it is well known, the finest passages of Pascal's writings were subjected; for practices such as these, are, more or less, common to every great writer; nor is the labour ever intermitted, until the whole composition is brought into a state of purity and grace; and the high demands of taste and judgment are fully satisfied.

If there have been, indeed, exceptions to these rules, they have been found in those rare instances in which the affluence of the mind, and prodigality of the imaginative powers, have poured out their purer ore with so exhaustless an abundance, that mankind have, on that account, been willing to forgive its large mixture of debasing alloy. Yet who has not desired that even a *Shakspere* had been able, or disposed, to submit many portions of his immortal effusions to revision, at a period when judgment was more chastised, while feeling and imagination remained uncooled?

Language, like music, demands the union of a refined ear, a pure taste, and much mental effort, to form its richest combinations and bring out its highest powers. Ill-chosen words and disjointed periods may convey the desired meaning to an uncultivated reader,—as notes may be strung together to amuse an unpractised ear. But the one is not to be dignified with the name of composition, or the other of harmony, when brought to the standard of judgment and taste.

We must not, however, forget that these accessories to a great work are not to be allowed to compensate for deficiency in the higher attributes of originality or strength. Who

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does not feel, that the choicest diction, and the smoothest style, are ineffectual to conceal poverty of thought, or failure of rhetorical force? Grace must be only the handmaid of knowledge, and felicity of language the plastic instrument of a high intelligence: judgment must maintain her authoritative seat; while imagination, feeling, and enthusiasm inform and pervade the whole composition. It is only by the combination of these qualities, that perfection is attained, and the literary art is complete. It is when they meet and harmonize, in the sustained diction, the appropriate epithet, the unbroken metaphor, and the varied pause;—when the stately period is alternated by the terse suggestion, or abrupt interrogatory;—when attention is relieved by graceful description, lucid reasoning, or high argument;—and again, (if the elevation of the subject justify the transition,) when the mind is quickened and roused by vehemence and declamation,—by breathing thoughts, and burning words;—it is then, that the mighty instrument, by which man holds communion with man, is strung and pitched to its full powers, and rolls its rich tones and harmonies into the transfixed spirit: then the whole intellectual being is mastered and possessed;—taste is satisfied, the ear filled, imagination excited, passion inflamed;—the fastnesses of the judgment and conviction are stormed. The chaplet of immortality invests the work, and it floats triumphantly down the stream of time!

It is from the insufficient cultivation of these higher qualities of excellence, that mediocrity so much pervades the literature of a period, when all are readers, and almost all writers. It is not that gross defects prevail,—for this the diffusion of taste and intelligence precludes; but eminence is not aimed at. The surface spreads widely, but the depth is lost. The urgency of demand causes eagerness and haste in the supply. Men write for the day; and rarely look forward to the longevity of years,—never of centuries. The standard of taste is debased; and literature—from the loftiest of arts—tends downward to a mechanical craft, and a sordid speculation. There is, I well know, little of novelty, and there may be thought to be somewhat of querulousness, in such remarks as these.

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And I am not forgetful of that caution which WISDOM directs, against an exaggeration of the merits of the past, in a depreciating comparison of the present. Many circumstances, also, incident to a highly artificial state of society, almost necessitate the evils complained of. A fast increasing population, the importunity of physical wants, wide extending education, and the ceaseless opening up of fresh topics of investigation, and new sources of intelligence; all these things keep the *press* in continual requisition, and multiply without limit ephemeral productions. But it is not to be denied, that it is by such means that the higher classes of literature become depressed. The works, which consume years in toil, and a life in meditation, meet with little encouragement. Statistics and calculations oppress the minds of men, wrestling to preserve a standing in life, or wrapt in the inextricable coil of speculation, or ambition: in their few moments of leisure, they resort with morbid eagerness (as the over-tasked body to fatal stimulants) to the pages of an unwholesome or unprincipled fiction: and thus, from this concurrence of causes, the purer efforts of imagination lose their interest; literary enthusiasm excites a smile; eloquence droops; and POETRY dies!

It is not then inconsistent with a cheerful view of present advantages, or with the most sanguine hopes of the future, to desire and aim at a better state of things. Something may be done by recalling great models, and holding up a high standard. We see, from time to time, that the public yet know how to appreciate learning and eloquence, depth of research, and enlargement of views. When a Macaulay delivers the deathless annals of a great nation, thousands bend spell-bound over the manly eloquence of his glowing page. Neither is there any want of taste and feeling, to welcome again chaste creations of fancy, such as those which have slept, but not died, with the broken staff and buried wand of our modern Prospero; or to wander with delighted foot among the sweet haunts of the Muses (although they have been closed to us from a yet more remote period);—

"Clear spring, or shady grove, or sunny hill."

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All may do their part and endeavour, that refinement of the intellect may keep pace with the enlargement of its acquisitions; that the amenities of life may adorn and solace its labours; and that a graceful literature may fulfil its fitting vocation, of ennobling the sentiments, purifying the heart, and rectifying the principles.

To return, however, from this too-extended digression :— Collections such as these that follow, are, as far as I am aware, unknown in our literature. Our libraries possess curious variations of eminent works; and they can show manuscripts, which the student would not exchange for volumes embossed with gold, or clasped with diamonds. But repositories, such as these, of the raw material of thought,— heaps of ore, out of which ingots of the purest specimens of national eloquence have been fused, and drawn out, are wanting among our learned treasures. Its novelty may, therefore, perhaps justify the copiousness of the assemblage, which otherwise might have demanded some reduction;—and, indeed, after the enthusiastic expressions with which M. Faugère has introduced these papers, it would have been scarcely consistent with good taste, to deviate from the rule upon which he has acted, in suppressing no portion, however imperfect, of these Notes. In a subsequent part of the work, however, I may find it expedient to exercise somewhat of an editorial discretion, in a measure of curtailment of the ample materials of a similar description furnished by the French Editor; not altogether unmindful of the caution (although a somewhat fastidious one) offered by his learned contemporary, M. Cousin, against the production of a *fac-simile* in the form of an edition. (*Translator.*)

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# THOUGHTS

ON

# THE JESUITS AND THE JANSENISTS.

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I. "*State super vias et interrogate de semitis antiquis, et ambulate in eis. Et dixerunt: Non ambulabimus, sed post cogitationem nostram ibimus.*" They have said to the people, Come with us; follow the opinions of the new authors; reason shall be our guide: we shall be like others, who follow each their natural light. Philosophers have . . . . . .*

All the various religions and sects have followed the guidance of natural reason. The Christian alone has submitted to rules imposed by another, and has conformed to those which Christ left behind him, to be transmitted to the faithful. Such a constraint was irksome to those worthy fathers: they wished for liberty to follow, like others, their own imaginations. In vain we cry to them, like the prophets of old time to the Jews, "Get you to the church; learn the laws of the ancients, and follow their paths." They reply, like the Jews, "We will not walk therein; we will follow the devices of our own heart." They have said, "We will be like others."

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II. † They cannot acquire perpetuity, and they seek

* The passage breaks off here, and the whole is erased in the MS.

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for universality; and, to gain this, they would corrupt the whole church, that they may be exalted to the rank of saints.

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III. † Can it be from anything but a worldly spirit that you allow such matters to be probable? Would you impose this upon us as truth; and, if duelling had not been sanctioned by fashion, would you, looking at it dispassionately, lay it down as a probable opinion, that people might lawfully fight and kill each other?

---

3.*

IV. † If they do not renounce the doctrine of probability, their good maxims have as little sanctity as their evil ones, for they are founded on mere human authority; and thus, if they are more just, they will be more conformable to reason; but not more really holy. They partake still of the wild stock upon which they are grafted.

— † If what I am stating does not serve to correct your errors, it will at least be useful to the public.

— † If these are silent, the stones will cry out.

— Silence is the greatest persecution. The saints are never silenced. It is true there should be a call; but it is not decrees of councils that should be studied,

* This figure 3, placed at the head of the page by Pascal, seems to show that this fragment was only the continuation of another passage, which has not been found. It is entirely in his hand-writing, and almost illegible. At the end of this volume is a *fac-simile* of page 100 of the MS., containing the second part of this fragment, now for the first time published entire. (French Editor.) This *fac-simile* is given in the Provincial Letters. See Appendix. (Transl.)

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if any one be conscious of such a call. Our lessons ought to be on the necessity of bearing our testimony. Now, when Rome has spoken, and when we believe that *she** has condemned the truth, and that this condemnation has been placed on record, and that the books which opposed it have been censured; we must raise our voices yet higher, in proportion as the censure is unjust, and it is sought to silence us with violence; till we succeed in finding a Pope who will listen with impartiality, and consult the voice of antiquity as his guide to justice.

— + Thus, while good Popes ever find the church complaining.

— The *Inquisition* and *the Society*, the two scourges of the Truth.

— + Why do they not charge you with Arianism? For they have said, that Jesus Christ is God; perhaps they mean, not by nature, but as it is said, "*Dii estis.*"

V. If my letters are condemned at Rome, what I condemn in them is condemned in *heaven!*†

— + "*Ad tuum, Domine Jesu, tribunal appello.*"

— + You yourselves are accessible to corruption.

— Finding myself condemned, I might have feared that my writings were objectionable; but the example of so many other pious works satisfies me of the contrary. It is no longer permitted to write well.

— So corrupt, or so ignorant is the Inquisition!

— It is better to obey God than man.

* In the MS. it stands *he*, which was meant by Pascal, no doubt, for the Pope. The whole of these notes are written with great rapidity.

† Some of the following passages have been already given in the original French in the Appendix to the Provincial Letters. (Transl.)



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— I fear nothing; I hope nothing. It is not so with the bishops. The Port Royal has its fears; and it is bad policy to disperse its members,* for they will then have nothing to fear for themselves; and thus will become more formidable to others.

— + I fear not your personal† censures, if they are not supported by the authority of tradition.

— + Will you censure everything? What! even my respect for yourselves? No. Say then what is it? You do nothing, unless you designate what is objectionable, and why it is so; and nothing could have been easier than to do this.

---

VI. + You abuse the confidence of the people in the church, and make them dissemblers.

---

VII. + The world must be blind indeed, to believe you!

---

VIII. + People without sincerity, without faith, without honour, without truth, double-hearted, double-tongued; and, like the amphibious animal in the fable, half fish and half bird. (Erased.)

IX. + The Port Royal is as good as Voltigerod. In proportion as your procedure is just according to that standard, it is unjust by the rule of Christian piety.

* Allusion to threats, that were at that time held out, of breaking up the Port Royal Society.

† This word is very obscure, and we are not sure that it is correctly rendered *personally*.

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X. It is important for kings and princes to be held in esteem for piety; and for this purpose they must take *you* for Confessors!

---

XI. † As often as the Jesuits succeed in taking the Pope by surprise, they will make all Christendom perjured.

— † The Pope is easily led into error through the multiplicity of his affairs, and his faith in the Jesuits; and the Jesuits have no difficulty in deceiving him, by their doctrine of calumny.*

---

XII. † *Universal.*

† Morals and languages are particular sciences, but universal in their nature.

XIII. † *Probability.*

— † The zeal of the saints in the pursuit of truth would be useless, if there were safety in probabilities.

† The fear of the saints who had always sought the highest measure of certainty.

† St. Theresa having always obeyed her Confessor.

XIV. † *Probable.*

† We may try our devotion to God, by comparing it with other things which we most regard.

† It is probable that this food will not poison me.

† It is probable that I shall not lose my suit by not urging it.

* Provincial Letters, XVIII.



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— + If it were true, that learned authors and their reasons were capable of settling these matters, I should then say, that they are not learned or reasonable. What! a husband may make a gain of his wife, according to Molina! Is the reason that he assigns satisfactory? or is the contrary so, which is assigned by Lessius?

XV. + Will you dare in this way to trifle with the king's edicts, by alleging that it is no duel, to go to the field for the purpose of meeting your antagonist? *

— + So, the church has forbidden duelling, but not to walk abroad!

+ And thus usury, but not . . . . .†

+ And simony, but not . . . . .‡

+ And revenge, but not . . . . . .

+ And the "*quam primum*," but not . . . . .

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XVI. + *Probab.*

+ Their interpretation of safety is curious. After having proved that all their ways are safe, they have pronounced to be safe, not that way which leads to heaven without danger of failure, but that which leads to it without danger of departing from that way.

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XVII. + *Probability.*

+ Every one may add; none may take away.

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XVIII. Those who love the church, lament the

* Provincial Letters, VII. † Ibid. VIII. ‡ Ibid. XII.

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corruption of morals; but they comfort themselves by reflecting that the laws remain. These men, however, corrupt the very laws themselves: the standard is destroyed.

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## XIX. † *Montalte.**

Lax opinions are so universally acceptable, that it is surprising that those which they hold should excite disgust. It is, however, because they have exceeded in them all bounds. There are, besides, many who see what is right, although they cannot attain to it; but there are few who do not know that the purity of religion is opposed to our corruptions. They see the absurdity of supposing that an eternal reward is held out for *Escobartan* morals.

The easiest modes of living, according to worldly principles, are the most difficult, according to those of God: on the contrary, nothing is so difficult in the esteem of the world, as a life of religion; nothing more easy in the view of God. Nothing is more easy, according to the world, than to possess large concerns and abundant wealth; nothing is more difficult in God's opinion, than to be immersed in such things, without imbibing a love for them, and being infected with their spirit.†

---

XX. Take away "probability," and you will never

* The feigned name under which the "Provincials" were published.

† The second paragraph of this passage is wanting in the MS. autograph, but it is found in the copy.

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please the world; concede it, and you will never displease it.

---

XXI. The zeal of the saints in the discovery and practice of holiness would be fruitless, if probability were safe.

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XXII. The Jansenists resemble heretics in the purity of their morals,* but you resemble them only in their evil qualities.

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XXIII. † "Probability." They hold some true principles, but they abuse them. Now the abuse of truth should be as severely condemned as the propagation of falsehood.

† As if they maintained that there were two *hells;* one for sinners against charity, the other for sinners against justice.

XXIV. † "*Probable.*"

† If such flagitious reasons as these are "probable," everything may be so:—

1st reason. "*Dominus actum conjugalium.*" (Molin.)

2d reason. "*Non potest compensari.*" (Less.)

† It is to oppose, not holy, but abomiable doctrines.

† They reason like those who would prove night to be noonday.

† Bauny, a burner of barns.†

* This is a striking, but indirect, testimony to those whom Pascal still continued to term "Heretics." (Transl.)

† Provincial Letters, No. VIII.

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— + * . . . . . The Council of Trent for priests committing mortal sin; "*quam primum*" . . .

---

XXV. + *Casuists.*

+ A considerable measure of alms-giving, a reasonable penance; although we cannot assign the just measure, we can see what is not such. It is amusing to see the Casuists pretend to fix it in the way they do!

— + People who accustom themselves to evil-speaking and evil-thinking.

— + The largeness of their numbers, so far from an evidence of their merits, proves the contrary.

— + The humility of one constitutes the pride of many.

---

XXVI. + They make the exception the rule. Did the ancient Fathers give absolution before penance? Do it, then, in the spirit of exception. But you make the exception your rule without exception; so that you do not allow that your rule admits of an exception.

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XXVII. + Sinners without penitence; righteous men without charity; a God without power over the will of man; a predestination without mystery! †

---

XXVIII. + They give the reins to lust, but cherish scrupulosity: the very contrary should be their rule.

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* Two words that are illegible.

† This thought occurs again further on, with some variation.

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## XXIX. + *Generals.*

+ They have not been content with introducing such morality into our temples; "*templis inducere mores.*" They have not only claimed to be tolerated in the church, but, as if they deemed themselves the stronger party, they have sought to drive out all those who are* . . . .

— + *Mohatra.*† One need be no *theologian* to be disgusted with it!

+ Who would have predicted of your Generals, that the time was at hand that they would prescribe‡ these morals to the universal church, and would call resistance to these corruptions an act of war: "*Tot et tanta mala pacem?*"

---

XXX. + See their inconsistency! On one hand they say we must follow tradition, and they dare not disavow it; and on the other, they will affirm just what they please. We may certainly believe the first, as it will be the same thing to oppose, as not to believe them.

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XXXI. + The servant knows not what his master does, for his master tells him only the act, but not its consequences; and thus he obeys servilely, and often sins in despite of the consequences. But Jesus Christ tells us consequences.

+ You violate these consequences.

---

* The copy has "*eux,*" but the MS. "*ceux.*"

† Provincial Letters, No. VIII.

‡ The copy has, instead of "*donneraient ces* mœurs," "*domineraient en* mœurs," which is unintelligible.

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XXXII. † "Probability" is necessary for other maxims, such as those respecting L'Ami,* and the calumniator.

— † "*A fructibus eorum;*" judge of their faith by their morals.

— † "Probability" avails little without corrupt means, and means are nothing without "probability."

— † There is a satisfaction in the power and in the knowledge to do good; "*scire et posse;*" grace and probability contribute to this satisfaction, for we may feel ourselves accountable to God, while we place reliance in their authorities.

---

XXXIII. † But is it probable that probability can satisfy?

Difference between ease of conscience and safety. Nothing produces safety but truth; nothing gives ease of conscience but a sincere endeavour to be virtuous.†

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XXXIV. † *Annat.*‡ He forms a disciple without ignorance, and a master without presumption.§

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† There is such a disproportion between the merit which he believes himself to possess and folly, that we can scarcely understand how he can so mistake himself.

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* Second Collection MS. of P. Guerrier. The reference is to P. L'Amy. 7th Provincial.

† This passage is only in the copy.

‡ Assistant of the Jesuits in France, and Confessor to Louis XIV. (See Provincial Letters.) (Transl.)

§ Only in the copy.



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† *The Jesuits.*

XXXV. † The Jesuits desire to reconcile God and the world, and have gained nothing but contempt from both. In the light of conscience this is evidently perceived; and even, as regards the world, they are not good politicians. They possess power, as I have often said, but it is, so to say, power in respect of other religionists. "They have sufficient credit to get a chapel built, and appoint a mart for indulgences; not to procure the appointment of bishoprics, or fill up ecclesiastical offices. It is a sorry position that these monks hold in the world, even by their own confession. (P. Brisacier * Benedictines.) Nevertheless . . . . . you yield to those whom you see to be more powerful than yourselves; and oppress, with all the puny means you possess, such as are less conversant than you in worldly intrigue.†

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XXXVI. † In corrupting the Bishops and the Sorbonne, if they have not the advantage of rendering their decision just, they have at least that of rendering their judges unjust. Thus, when the time shall come that they themselves shall be condemned, they will be able to plead "*ad hominem*," that the tribunal is unjust, and so they will demur to its decision. But this will avail them nothing. For as they cannot now conclude that the Jansenists are rightly condemned, merely from the fact of their condemnation, so will they not be able to conclude that themselves are unjustly condemned, because their

* The Troyes MS. has "*P. Besaciers.*"
† Second Coll. MS. P. Guerrier.

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judges are corrupt. Their sentence will be just, not because it is pronounced by judges of uniform integrity, but of integrity in that particular instance; which will be demonstrated by other means.*

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XXXVII. † Heretics, who fortify themselves by means of the corrupt doctrines of the Jesuits, ought to be informed that they are not those of the church. . . . . the doctrine of the church, and our divisions yet leave us one *altar*.†

---

XXXVIII. † If, while differing among ourselves, we were to condemn, you would be right. Uniformity, without diversity, is useless to others; diversity, without uniformity, ruinous to ourselves. The one is injurious externally, the other internally.‡

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XXXIX. † The casuists leave the decision of their questions to a corrupt reason, and the choice between those decisions to a corrupt will; so that everything that is most corrupt in man's nature takes part in their proceedings.§

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XL. † The whole body of their casuists cannot succeed in satisfying the conscience, while it is in error; and, therefore, it is most important to make choice of sound guides.

* Second Coll. MS. P. Guerrier. Might we not say that Pascal actually foresaw the judicial expulsion of the Jesuits from France, which occurred a hundred years after?

† Second Coll. MS. P. Guerrier. The points indicate a break in the MS.

‡ Ibid. § Ibid.

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† Thus they will be doubly culpable; both in following those courses which they ought not to have followed, and in listening to teachers to whom they ought not to have listened.*

---

XLI. † As the two leading objects of the church are, the building up the piety of the faithful, and the conversion of heretics, we are the more afflicted at the conspiracy which prevails in the present day for introducing errors, of all others, the most calculated to preclude the return of heretics into her bosom, and fatally to corrupt the few remaining pious and catholic members of our communion! The assaults at this time so openly made upon the great truths of religion, and such as are the most vital to our salvation, fill us not only with grief, but with alarm and dismay: because, independently of the resentment which all Christians should feel at these disorders, we are under especial obligation to seek remedies for them, and to employ the authority which God has committed to us, to see that the people entrusted to our charge, &c., &c.†

---

XLII. † As the tranquillity of the state is chiefly to be valued for preserving in safety the possessions and privileges of the people, so the tranquillity of the church serves for securing the truth, which is her possession, the treasure nearest to her heart. And as no state ought to suffer, without opposition, the ravages of an enemy in her borders, from a mistaken unwillingness to interrupt

* The last four paragraphs are from M. P. Guerrier's collection of MS.
† MS. collection of Guerrier.

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tranquillity; and peace is only just and valuable when it serves the purpose of securing our privileges;—it becomes unjust, and pernicious, when it leaves them exposed; and a war that is undertaken for their defence, is righteous and necessary. In the same way, when truth is violated, by the enemies of the faith seeking to undermine it in the hearts of believers, and to replace it with errors;—would it then be to serve the church, or to betray her, to remain in peace? Is it not, I ask, plain, that, as it is sinful to disturb peace, when truth is in the ascendant, it is equally so to continue in peace, when truth is subverted? There is a time when peace is fitting, and a time when it is unfitting. It is written, "There is a time for peace, and a time for war;" and it is for the interests of truth, duly to discern that time. But there is not a time for truth, and a time for error: on the contrary, it is written, that the truth of God remains ever sure; and therefore it is, that Christ, while he says he is come to give peace, says also, he is come to bring war into the world. But he says not that he is come to bring both truth and falsehood. Truth is then the first principle, and the great end of all things.*

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XLIII. + Those who have written such things † in *Latin*, speak them in *French*.

+ The evil of putting them into French having been committed, it became necessary to do the good act of condemning them.

* MS. in Library at Troyes, p. 53. These reflections are essentially reproduced, but with some variations, in the 2d "Factum pour les *Curés de Paris*." Edit. Bossut, vol. iii., p. 47.

† Referring, doubtless, to the morality of the Casuists.

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— † There is one heresy only, which is explained differently in the schools and in the world.

---

XLIV. † "*Est et non est,*"—is this to be admitted as part of the same faith, as well as miracles . . . *

— † When St. Xavier performs miracles . . .

— † St. Hilary.— † Unhappy persons! to compel us to talk of miracles. (Erased.)

Unjust judges! make not your laws for the occasion, but frame your decisions according to established precedents, and those even of your own.

"*Væ! qui conditis leges iniquas.*"

— To weaken your adversaries, you dispossess the whole church of her arms.

— † Perpetual miracles, false.

— If they affirm that our salvation is from God, they are heretics.

If they say, they are obedient to the Pope, that is hypocrisy.

They are ready to subscribe all the decrees; that avails them not.

If they say, life may not be taken for an apple,† they contravene catholic morality.

If miracles are wrought amongst them, that is no proof of purity of faith; but rather excites suspicion of heresy.

---

The obduracy of the Jesuits surpasses, then, that of the Jews, for they only condemned Christ, because they

* Three or four words follow that are illegible.

† Provincial Letters, No. XIII.

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doubted that his miracles were wrought by a Divine power; while the Jesuits, although they do not doubt that the Port Royal miracles are from God, still condemn the brotherhood as guilty.*

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XLV. + Oppressors and persecutors of those who enjoy the visible protection of God.

— + When they upbraid your obliquities, they are heretics.

— + When they say the grace of Christ separates his people, they are heretics.

— + If they perform miracles, it is a proof of heresy.

— + It is said, (Ezekiel,) Behold the people of God that speak thus!

— + Hezekiah.

— + My reverend Father, all those things were figures. All other religions have perished; this will never perish.

Miracles are more important than you suppose; they have served for the foundation, and will be the preservation of the church, till Antichrist shall come, which will be the end of all things.

+ The two witnesses.†

— + In the Old and New Testaments, miracles were wrought for the explanation of figures. They either concerned our salvation, or were useless, except to prove that we ought to submit ourselves to creatures. Figure of the sacrament.‡

* This passage, although there is some probability of its being Pascal's, is not to be found in the MS. autograph; nor in any other MS. which we have consulted.

† Apocalypse.

‡ This passage is unusually obscure: and the thought seems very rudi-

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— † The synagogue was a figure, and thus did not perish: it was no more than a figure, and therefore it has perished. It was a figure, containing in it truth; and therefore has subsisted till the time came when it contained truth no longer.

---

XLVI. † There have always been times when men have held the doctrine of the true God, and when the true God has revealed himself to men.

— † Two foundations; one internal, the other external; grace, miracles; all supernatural.

— † Unhappy men, to compel me thus to recur to the very foundations of religion!

— Sinners purified without repentance; the just justified without charity; Christians without the grace of Christ; God without power over the will of his creatures; a predestination without mystery; a redemption without certainty.

Miracles are no longer necessary, because we have them already. But when tradition is no longer listened to, when nothing is suggested but the Pope,—when he too has been circumvented; and when, having thus cast off the real sources of truth—tradition, and circumvented the Pope—its depositary, truth can no more be freely manifested: then it is that men, no longer speaking the truth, the truth itself must speak to men. This is what occurred in the time of Arius.

mental. The following is the original, which is only attempted to be rendered literally:—"*En l'ancien testament et au nouveau, les miracles sont fait pour l'affranchissement des figures. Salut ou chose inutile, sinon pour montrer qu'il faut se soumettre aux créatures.—Figure du sacrament.*" (Transl.)

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— † Miracles under Dioclesian and under Arius.

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XLVII. The three marks of religion, perpetuity, holiness of life, miracles.

They subvert perpetuity by their "probability;" holiness, by their moral system; miracles, by destroying either their authority or their results.

† If we are to believe them, the church has nothing more to do than to establish perpetuity, holiness, miracles.

Heretics contradict them, or deny the consequences: they do the same thing. † But they must either be without sincerity in the denial, or without rationality in denying the consequences.

---

XLVIII. † Be this as it may, the church is left without evidences if they are in the right.

---

XLIX. † I suppose miracles will be believed.

— † You corrupt religion to favour your friends, or to prejudice your enemies. You make it the mere instrument of your will.

---

L. *Perpetuity.*

† Is your character staked upon Escobar?

— † You have, perhaps, reasons for not condemning him; it might be sufficient for you to concur in what I am now addressing you respecting him.

— † Would the Pope be dishonoured by deriving his illumination from God and from tradition? and is it not dishonouring him to separate him from this holy union?*

* 2d. Coll. MS. P. Guerrier.

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— + Tertullian; "*nunquàm Ecclesia reformabitur.*"

— + Perpetuity.

— Molina.

— Novelty.

— + Heretics have always combated these three marks of authenticity, of which they are themselves not possessed.

---

LIII. + These are the results of the sin, both of the people and of the Jesuits: the great wished to be flattered; the Jesuits wished for the favour of the great. Both deserve to be abandoned to a spirit of falsehood;—the one for deceiving, the other for being deceived. They have been avaricious, ambitious, voluptuous: "*Coacervabunt sibi magistros.*"*

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LIV. + It is consistent in them to commit injustice, lest the Molinists should appear to have acted with justice. Thus they must not be spared; they are to have the credit of doing such things.

---

LV. It is right to hear both sides: that has been my case.

+ When we have heard only one side, we are apt to incline to it, and then the opposite side comes, and changes our view; but here the Jesuit confirms it.

— + Not what they say, but what they do.

— + It is against *me* only they clamour; I am content. *I know to whom I must render account.*

— + Christ has ever been a "Rock of offence."

— + Condemnable, condemned.

* 2d. Coll. MS. P. Guerrier.

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LVI. † *Policy.*

† We have found two obstacles in our endeavour to give men comfort:—the one, the internal rules of the Gospel; the other, the external laws of the state and of religion. Of the one, we are masters; with the other, this is the way we have dealt . . . . "*amplienda, restringenda, à majori ad minus.*"
*Junior.*

---

LVII. † . . . . Let us treat them as mercifully as it is possible to do, holding the middle course between the love of truth and the dues of charity.

† Piety does not consist in never opposing our fellow-men; it were very easy, &c., &c.

† It is a false piety that would preserve peace at the expense of truth. It is also a false zeal to maintain truth by a violation of charity.

— † Thus they have herein no cause of complaint.

— † Their maxims have their time and their place.

— † Their vanity tends to raise them above their errors.

† Resembling the pagans in their faults, and the martyrs in their punishment.

— † They had only to take the extract and disavow it.

— † "*Sanctificum prælium.*"

— † Mons. Bourseys, can they not at least deny that he opposes the condemnation?

---

LVIII. † Jesus Christ never condemned without hearing. To Judas he said, "*Amice, ad quid venisti?*" To the guest without the wedding garment, the same, &c.

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+ "*Nisi videritis signa, non creditis :*" he blames them, not for not believing without miracles, but for not being themselves the spectators of them.*

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LIX. + But it is impossible for God to be the end, if he be not the beginning.

+ They direct their eyes on high, but they build upon the sand; and the ground shall shake, and they shall fall while looking up to the heavens.†

---

LX. + After so many marks of piety, they‡ now possess that of persecution, the best of all.

---

LXI. + If St. Augustin were among us now, and carried as little weight as his defenders, he would be powerless. God dealt well with his church in sending him forth with suitable credentials.

---

LXII. + Truth is so obscured, and falsehood so rampant, in the present day, that it is charity alone that can recognize her.

---

LXIII. + If there was ever a period when we are justified in professing two opposite principles, it is when we are reproached with omitting one of them. The Jesuits and the Jansenists then are wrong in concealing them; but the Jansenists are the most so, for the Jesuits have succeeded best in professing both.

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* MS. collection of P. Guerrier. † Ibid. ‡ The Jansenists.

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LXIV. † The five propositions condemned—no miracle in that, for truth was not attacked. But the Sorbonne,—the Bull . . . .

LXV. — † It is impossible that those who love God with their whole heart can undervalue the church, so strong are her evidences.

---

LXVI. These females,* overwhelmed with astonishment at finding it stated that they were in the high-way to perdition; that their Confessors were leading them to Geneva; and inculcating the belief that Christ was not present in the Eucharist, nor at the right hand of the Father;—knowing the falsehood of these allegations, they committed themselves to God in the spirit of the Psalmist: "*Vide si via iniquitatis in me est.*"† What was the consequence? That place of theirs which had been called the Temple of Satan, God made his own sanctuary. It was declared that children ought to be removed from their domicile; God made it the scene of their recovery from disease. Their dwelling was said to be the "Arsenal of Hell;" God distinguished it as the repository of his graces. Finally, they were menaced with all the wrath and all the vengeance of heaven; and, lo! God has overwhelmed them with his favours. He must be bereft of sense and reason who can believe such persons to be in the way to perdition.

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* The Nuns of Port Royal. See Provincial Letters, No. XVI.
† Ps. cxxxviii. 24.

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LXVII. + The five propositions were equivocal; they are so no longer.

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LXVIII. + Happy he who is condemned on the authority of Escobar!

---

+ You will charge me in vain with traducing Escobar, for he is too well known.

---

LXIX. + To the heart of man it is a matter of indifference whether there be three or four Persons in the Trinity; but not, &c., &c. Thence it is that they are eager to sustain the one, and not the other.

+ It is well to do the one, but the other must not be omitted. God has equally declared, &c., &c.

+ Thus, he who believes only the one and not the other, does not believe it because God has revealed it, but because his own inclinations do not lead him to deny it; and he is willing to assent, and thus satisfy in an easy manner his conscience by bearing a cheap testimony, &c., &c. . . . .

+ Yet is it a false testimony.

---

LXX. + It is the extravagant idea you have conceived of the importance of your society, that has led you to put forth these atrocious maxims. It is evident that this is your method in regard to calumny, for you stigmatize in me as scandalous, the very same kind of misrepresentations, which, in your own case, you justify. Why?

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Because you regard me as a mere individual, but yourselves as—*Imago.**

— † It is clear that your praises are follies, by the foolish . . . . . , as the privilege of "*non damné.*"

— † Do you deem it calculated to encourage your children to condemn them when they are seeking to serve the church?

— † It is a device of Satan to divert into other fields the arms with which those persons are combating heresy.

— † Your policy is bad.

— † What says St. Paul? Does he adduce the testimony of prophecies at all times? No; but miracles.

— † What says Jesus Christ? Does he bring forward prophecies? No; his own death had not yet fulfilled them; but he says, "*si non fecissem:*" believe the works.

— † "*Si non fecissem quæ alius non fecit.*"

— † Abraham, Gideon, were confirmed in their faith through miracles.

— † Two supernatural foundations of our faith, which is wholly supernatural; the one visible, the other invisible.

— † Miracles with grace, miracles without grace.

— † The synagogue, which has been regarded with satisfaction as a figure of the church, and with dislike as being nothing more than a figure, has been restored, being ready to fall when it was an object of Divine favour, and yet only a figure.

* Allusion to a work intended as an apology for the Society: "*Imago primi seculi.*" Pascal speaks of this book in the commencement of his 5th Provincial.

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Miracles prove the power of God over the heart, by that which he exercises over the body.

+ The church has never allowed of miracles among heretics.

— + Miracles the support of religion. They distinguished the Jews from other nations; and now they, in the same way, distinguish the Christians, saints, the innocent in life, true believers.

— A miracle among schismatics is not a thing to fear; for the schism, which is more palpable even than the miracle, plainly marks their error. But when there is no schism, and the error is the question in dispute, then the miracle makes the distinction.

— + *Judith.* God makes himself heard at last in the midst of these later oppressions.

+ If the decay of charity leaves the church almost without true worshippers, miracles will serve to revive it.

+ It is one of the last effects of grace.

— + O, could a miracle be wrought upon the Jesuits!

— + When a miracle disappoints the expectations of those among whom it is wrought, and there is a disproportion between the state of their faith and the efficacy of the miracle, then a change must be made. But with you it is otherwise: there would be as good reason to say that if the Eucharist raised a body from death, you must become a Calvinist, as remain a Catholic.

+ But when it fulfils their expectation, and those who were looking for the blessing of God upon the remedies, find themselves cured without the use of remedies . . .

+ Impious! Never was a miracle wrought by the

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power of the devil, without a more signal one being wrought on God's part; at least without a prediction that such would be the case.

---

*On the miracle.**

+ As God never rendered a family more happy, so has he never found one more grateful.

---

+ I have read them again since, for I did not know them.† . . . .

---

*The end.*‡

+ Are we safe: is the principle sure? Let us examine. Our own testimony goes for nothing. St. Thomas.

---

+ Will that person scoff at the other? Who ought to scoff? Yet this one scoffs not, but pities him.

---

+ They seek concealment in a throng, and call in numbers to their aid. Tumult.

---

* That is, the miracle wrought at Port Royal, on Pascal's niece, by the touch of the holy thorn. (The incident will be found in some of the popular Memoirs of Pascal.) The above few notes and memoranda relating to it are peculiarly obscure; but I have thought it right to give them as nearly as possible as they stand in the original. (Transl.)

† There is nothing in the MS. to indicate the reference of this detached line. Could Pascal mean the works of the Casuists; and that he had *read* enough of them?

‡ It is not known to what this passage refers.



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# PENSÉES ET NOTES POUR LES PROVINCIALES.*

## I.

Lettre des établissements violents des jésuites partout.

— Aveuglement surnaturel.

— Cette morale qui a en tête un Dieu crucifié.

— Violà ceux qu'ils ont fait vœu d'obéir, *tanquam Christo.*

—La décadence des jésuites.

— Notre religion qui est toute divine.

— Un casuiste, miroir.

Si vous le trouvez bon c'est son signe.

— C'est une chose étrange qu'il n'y a pas moyen de leur donner l'idée de la religion.

— Un Dieu crucifié.

— Pour la foule des casuistes, tant s'en faut que ce soit un sujet d'accusation contre l'Église, que c'est au contraire un sujet de gémissement de l'Église.

— Et afin que nous ne soyons point suspects, comme

* A few specimens of the original French were furnished in the Appendix to the Provincial Letters, No. VIII., and a small number is here further given as proofs of the abrupt and incomplete state in which these Notes exist. (Transl.)

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# THOUGHTS AND NOTES FOR THE PROVINCIAL LETTERS.*

## I.

LETTER upon the compulsory establishment of the Jesuits everywhere.

— Preternatural blindness.

— This system of morals, which has in its front a crucified God!

— Behold the men to whom they have taken a vow of obedience: "*tanquam Christo!*"

— The decline of the Jesuits.

— Our religion which is wholly divine.

— A Casuist, a mirror.

If you approve it, it is his testimony.

— It is strange that there are no means of conveying to them an idea of religion.

— A crucified God.

— As to the multitude of the Casuists, so far from being a ground of reproach against the Church, it is rather a cause of grief to the church.

— And that we may not be suspicious, like the Jews,

* All these Thoughts and Notes are published for the *first* time, although not preceded by the mark †.



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les Juifs qui portent les livres, qui ne sont point suspects aux Gentils, ils nous portent leurs constitutions.

— En . . . . . cette affaire . . . . . ils sont . . . . . .*

— Mais quel renversement! Les enfants aiment la corruption en l'embrassant. Leurs ennemis les abhorrent.

---

LXVI. Nous-mêmes n'avons pu avoir de maximes générales. Si vous voyez nos constitutions à peine nous connaîtrez-vous; elles nous font mendiants et ennemis des cours, et cependant . . . etc. — Mais ce n'est pas les enfreindre, car la gloire de Dieu partout.

Il y a diverses voies pour y arriver. St. Ignace a pris les unes; et maintenant d'autres. Il était meilleur pour le commencement de proposer la pauvreté et la retraite. Il a été meilleur ensuite de prendre le reste. Car cela eût effrayé de commencer par le haut; cela est contre nature.

Ce n'est pas que la règle générale ne soit qu'il faut s'en tenir aux instituts, car on en abuserait. On en trouverait peu comme nous qui sachions nous élever sans vanité.

— Deux obstacles: l'Évangile; lois de l'Etat.— *A majori ad minus. Junior.*

— Les jansénistes en portent la peine.

— Dieu nous protége visiblement contre les jugements téméraires et les scrupules.

* Les points remplacent cinq à six mots illisibles.

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who carry their books without suspicion to the Gentiles, they bring us their Constitutions.

— In . . . . . this affair . . . . . they are *

— But what a contrast! Their disciples love and cherish corruption: their adversaries abhor it.

---

As for us, we could not lay down any general rules. If you look at our Constitutions, you will scarcely be able to recognize us; they make us mendicants, and enemies of courts, and yet . . . &c.—But it is no infringement of them, for the glory of God is everywhere . . . . . .

There are various ways of proceeding. St. Ignacius took one; and now others are in fashion. It was best at the outset to prescribe poverty and retirement: further objects were more advantageously postponed to the future. It would have excited alarm to begin at too high a pitch: it would have been unnatural.

Not that the general rule was not to conform to the institutes; for they might be abused. Few would be found able, like ourselves, to bear elevation without vanity.

— Two obstacles,—the Gospel, and the laws of the state.—"*A majori ad minus.*" *Junior.*

— The Jansenists bear the penalty.

— God evidently protects us against rash judgments, and groundless scruples.

* Several words illegible in the MS.

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— Toute la vérité d'un côté: nous l'étendons aux deux.

(*Sur la même page du MS., se trouvent quelques indications d'auteurs comme celles-ci:*

Le Père St. Jure.—Escobar.

*Tanto vero.*—Aquaviva. 14 déc. 1621.

Clément et Paul. 5.

St. Thérèse. 474.—Roman Rose etc.)

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751. Un bout de capuchon arme 25,000 moines.

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## II.

| *Notes écrites de la main d'Arnauld.* | *Contre-notes de la main de Pascal.* |
|---|---|
| Ep. 16. *Aquavivæ. De formandis concionatoribus.* | Tous les Pères pour les conformer à son imagination, au lieu de former sa pensée sur celle des Pères. |
| p. 373. *Longè falluntur qui ad—irrigaturæ.* | |
| Ep. 1. *Mutii Vitelesci.* | |
| p. 289. *Quamvis enim probè norim — et absolutum.* | |
| p. 390. *Dolet ac queritur —esse modestiam.* | Modestie. |
| p. 392. *Lex ne dimidiata —reprehendit.* | La messe. Je ne sais ce qu'il dit. |
| 408. *Ita feram illam — etiam irrumpat.* | Politique. |

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— All the truth on one side: we extend it to both.

(On this page of the MS. are references to various authors, such as Père St. Jure, Escobar, Aquaviva, Clement et Paul, &c.)

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The tip of a hood sets up in arms twenty-five thousand monks.

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## II.

*Pascal's Notes.*

To bring all the Fathers into conformity with his fancies, rather than conform his opinions to those of the Fathers.

Modesty.

The mass. I know not what he says.

Policy.

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| *Notes écrites de la main d'Arnauld.* | *Contre-notes de la main de Pascal.* |
|---|---|
| 409. *Ad extremum pervelim—circumferatur.* | Par un malheur ou plutôt un bonheur singulier de la société, ce que l'un fait est attribué à tous. |
| 410. *Querimoniæ—Deprehendetis*, p. 412. | Obéir aux évêques exactement ; qu'il ne paraisse pas que nous prétendions nous mesurer à eux, à l'exemple de St. Xavier. |
| 412. *Ad hæc si à litibus—aviditatis.* | Testaments, procès. |
| 413. *Patris Borgiæ—illam futuram.* | Ils augmentent, ils inventent même de fausses histoires. |
| 415. *Ita res domesticas—nunc dimittis*, etc. | |
| Ep. 2. *Mutii Vitelesci.* | |
| 432. *Quarto nonnullorum—quam ardentissimè possum urgere.* | Probabilité. *Tueri pius potest, probabilis est, autore non caret.* |
| 433. *Quoniam vero de loquendi licentia—aut raro plectatur.* | Manque de punir les médisants. |
| Ep. 3. *Mutii Vitelesci.* | |
| p. 437. *Nec sanè dubium—nihil jam detrimenti acceperit.* | Que la société ne se gâte. |
| p. 440. *Ardentissimè Deum exoremus — operari non est gravatus et tu fili*, etc. Ezech., 37. | |

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Unluckily, or rather by a singular good fortune, whatever is done by one member of the society is attributed to all.

To obey, scrupulously, the bishops; that we may not appear to affect any rivalry of them, like St. Xavier.

Wills. Suits.

They make additions—they invent even false narratives.

Failure in inflicting punishment upon slanderers.

Lest the society should corrupt itself.



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| *Notes écrites de la main d' Arnauld.* | *Contre-notes de la main de Pascal.* |
|---|---|
| p. 441. *Secundum caput—tanti facimus.* | Manque d'obéissance, pour chercher leur réputation. |
| p. 442. *Hæc profecto una si deficiet—qui hæc molitur*, etc. | Manque d'obéissance, chercher l'appui des grands. |
| p. 443. *Ex hoc namque vitio — importunum præbeat.* | Ils font des choses indécentes et hors l'état de la Société, et disent que les grands seigneurs les importunent pour cela ; mais ce sont eux qui les importunent, de sorte qu'il faut ou les avoir pour ennemis si on les refuse, ou perdre la Société en l'accordant. |
| 443. *Spectabit tertium caput —mutatus est color optimus.* | Chasteté. |
| 445. *De paupertate—non adversentur veritati.* | Pauvreté. Relâchements d'opinions contraires à la vérité. |
| 445. *Nobilis quidam Romæ —collocabit.* | |
| p. 446. *Faxit Deus—atque si prætermitterentur.* | Vignes, etc. |

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Failure of obedience in promoting their reputation.

Failure of obedience in seeking the support of the great.

They commit enormities, and such as are quite foreign to the principles of the society, alleging that persons of high station importune them to do so; whereas it is they that are the solicitors, insomuch as they know they must either make such persons their enemies by refusal, or corrupt the Society by yielding to their wishes.

Chastity.

Poverty. Relaxed opinions opposed to truth.

Vines, &c.

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III.

— Have you a proper idea of our society?

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— The church has subsisted so long without these questions.

— The others do it, but not in the same manner.

— What comparison is there, do you suppose, between twenty thousand individuals, and two hundred thousand members, who would all perish for each other? A body possessed of immortality.

— We will maintain ourselves till death. Lama.

— We urge our opponents. M. Puys.

— Everything depends upon probability.

— The world naturally likes some kind of religion, but an accommodating one.*

— He has a mind that I should show it you by a strange supposition. I will then state . . . . .

Did not God, by his special providence, sustain us for the benefit of the church, I could prove to you that, humanly speaking only, we cannot perish.

— Grant me this principle, and I will prove to you the whole. It is, that the society and the church are involved in a common destiny. Without this nothing can be done.

— Persons do not continue long in a state of open profligacy, nor are they naturally disposed to the practice of great austerities. An *accommodating* religion is fittest for duration.

They court them by licentiousness.

— For individuals who do not aspire to rule by force of arms, I know no better methods.

Rectitude and good faith in devotion.

452. Kings, nursing-mothers.

* In the margin, Kings, Pope, 3 Reg. 246.

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4. Hatred on account of their merit.

Apel. Universe. 159. Decree of Sorbonne.

Kings. 241.

228.

Jesuits hung. 112.

Religion and science.

— "*Jesuita omnis homo.*"

— Colleges, relatives, friends, children, to be chosen.

*Constitutions.*

253. Poverty, ambition.

257. Chiefly princes and noblemen, who can both injure and benefit.

12. Useless things rejected. Good address, riches, nobility, &c. What! Were you afraid that they would not be earlier admitted?

27.

47. To give his property to the society for the glory of God. *Dec.**

51. 52. Harmony of views. *Decl.:* To submit to the society, and thus secure uniformity. But in the present day this uniformity consists in differences, for so the society determines.

117. *Const.:* The Gospel and St. Thomas. *Decl.:* some accommodating kind of theology.

65. The learned and scientific seldom pious; but now their opinion is changed.

23. 74. Falsehood.

* These are the *Declarations* of the Generals of the Order, which have the same force as the *Constitutions.* (French Editor.)

The figures in the margin, and elsewhere, obviously refer to passages in various Jesuit works. (Transl.)

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19. To yield nothing to relatives, and rest satisfied with the advisers appointed by the Superior.

1. Not to practise examination. *Decl.*

2. Entire poverty: no *masses.* Neither for sermon, nor by alms; compensation.

4. *Decl.* equally binding with the *Cons.* (end); read the *Const.* every month.

149. The *Declarations* spoil all.

154. Not to excite to continual alms-giving, nor demand them as matter of justice, nor charity-box.

*Decl.* "*Non tanquam Eleemosina.*"

200. 4. . . . . warned of everything.

190. *Const.* requires not . . . . . interpreted.

— By our religion we should be all rich, without our Constitution. Therefore we are poor.

— And by means of a true religion, and even without it, we are powerful.

---

Cle.* . . . . . .

Our Generals are apprehensive of injury, through our external occupations. 208. 152. 150.

On account of the court. 209. 203. 216. 218.

Because they might not follow the safest and the most authoritative opinions, St. Thomas, &c. 215. 218.

"*Stipendium contra Constit.*" 218.

Females. 225. 228.

Princes of policy. 227. 168. 177.

Probability. } 279.
Novelty. }

* Two words illegible.

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To beguile time and amuse themselves, rather than promote man's salvation. 158.

Relaxed opinions. 160.

Mortal and venial sin.

Contrition. 162.

Policy. 162.

*. . . . 162. 182.

The enjoyments of life are on the increase among the Jesuits. 166.

Apparent and false advantages which deceive them. 192. *ad.*

Complaints of the Generals. None of St. Ignace. None of Laynez; some of Borgia and Aquaviva. Multitude of Mutius, &c.

P. Lemoine: 10,000 crowns out of his province.

See the imperfection of man's foresight! All those things from which our earlier leaders apprehended injury to our society, are those by which she has been strengthened,—high patronage, the inconsistency of our Constitutions, multitude of orders, diversity and novelty of opinions, &c.

Policy. 181.

The early spirit of the Society extinct, 184 *ad* 189. —170, 171 *ad* 174.

"*Non e più quella.*" *Vitelescus.* 180.

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To refer to personal vices.

— Beautiful letter of Aquaviva, 18 June, 1611, against probable opinions.

* One word illegible.

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St. Augustin. 282.

— And as to St. Thomas, the parts in which he has expressly treated of these things.

"*Climaq. pour l*" . . . . . 277.

And novelties.

And it is no excuse for the Superiors to allege that they were ignorant, for they ought to have known. 279. 194.

— As to morality, 283. 288. 192.

— Aquoquiez confessed females.

— The Society placed to the account of the church, for good and for evil. 236. 156.

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## IV.

To examine the motives of the censure by the phenomena.

To form an hypothesis which should serve to . . .

— The habit forms the doctrine.

— You confess multitudes who confess only once a year. (Erased.)

— I considered that he held one opinion to balance another. (Erased.)

— When we are so hardened as to have lost all remorse, we do not . . . .* (Erased.)

You persecute M. Arnaud † then, without remorse. (Erased.)

— I suspect this doctrine, for it appears to me too mild for the malignity which they impart to me.

* Two words illegible.

† Pascal's habit was to write *Arnaud*, instead of *Arnauld*.

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I am suspicious of their union, on account of their individual contrarieties. I shall wait till they agree, before I take any part. For one friend, I should make many enemies. I am not learned enough to controvert them.

— Why, would you not select some great heresy? (Erased.)

— The wagerer. (Erased.)

I supposed we might be condemned for having never had good thoughts; but to believe that no one hasany, is to me certainly a novelty.* (Erased.)

— What is the object of this? To console the righteous, and to save the despairing? No; for no one can tell whether they be righteous or not.

— M. Chamillard would be a heretic, which is manifestly untrue, for he has written in favour of M. Arnaud. (Erased.)

— Those who think they do well in committing sin. (Erased.)

— In the year 1647, all might yet agree; in 1650 it was more difficult, &c.

— Luther, *everything, but true.*†

— If there had not been in the church any similar instance, but herein I trust to my curate!

— There is only one who speaks the truth.

— However little inconvenience it may cause, they produce from it more grace, for they dispose of it as of their own.

* This passage will be found almost literally in the 4th Provincial.

† This is a remarkable instance of the pregnant character of some of Pascal's hasty reflections. What would he have thought of Luther, could he have brought himself to believe him *in the truth?* (Transl.)

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— For every several occasion, a distinct species of grace, —grace for the great, grace for the commonalty. (Erased.)

— At last M. Chamillard has approached so near, that if there are degrees by which we may arrive at nullity, this "*suffisante grâce*" is now the nearest to it.

Amazing, to be a heretic for that! (Erased.)

— Every one was surprised at this, for as it has never been discovered in the Scriptures, or the Fathers, &c.

— How long, my father, has this been an article of faith? It can be, at most, only since the invention of the terms, "*pouvoir prochain*;" and I should think this heresy was contemporary with his birth, and he was born for this one object only.*

— The censure merely forbids this way of speaking of St. Peter; nothing more. (Erased.)

— I am under great obligation to them. . . (Erased.) —They are adroit folks; they were fearful that these letters written to the provincials. . . . . (Erased.)

— It is not the punishment for a word. (Erased.)

— The colourings have wronged me.

— The same proposition shall be good in one writer, and objectionable in another. Yes; but there are, then, other bad propositions.

— There are some who defer to the censure; others, to the reasons assigned;—all, to reasons of some description or other.† I am surprised that you have not with you the general, rather than the individual approval; or at least, that you have not united them.

— How am I consoled! No Frenchman is a good Catholic.

* 1st Provincial Letter.

† 2d Provincial Letter.

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— The* . . . . Clement VIII.—Paul V.—Censure.

God evidently protects us.

— How small is man's capacity! He cannot even form a worm.

— Instead of† . . . . grace to proceed thither.

— Multitude of graces.

— Jansenist interpreters.

— St. Augustin has the most, on account of the dissentions of his opponents. Besides one thing which we may consider as an uninterrupted tradition of twelve thousand Popes, councils, &c. (Erased.)

— M. Arnaud's opinions must certainly be very unfortunate, that they should infect all who are connected with him.‡

— The censure will render them this service,—that, when condemned, they will defend themselves by alleging that they follow the Jansenists.

---

## V.

### Diana.

That is very useful to us. (Erased.)

. . . . . .

*It is lawful not to confer benefices without a charge of souls to the most deserving.* § The Council of Trent seems to lay down the contrary; but thus it is proved,

* Illegible.

† Illegible.

‡ See 3d Provincial, towards the close.

§ Prov. Letters, VI., XII., &c. The references to the Letters are now so obvious, and in many instances so literal, that it is unnecessary to indicate them further. (Transl.)

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*If this were so, all the bishops would be lost, for they have all done the same thing.* (11.)

*The King and the Pope are not bound to promote the most deserving. If it were otherwise, they would both incur a terrible responsibility.* (11.)

And again,—*If this opinion were not sound, penitents and their Confessors would have much to do; and therefore I hold, that in practice it must be followed.* (21.)

And in another place, where he lays down the conditions for constituting a sin mortal, he brings together so many circumstances that scarcely any can commit mortal sin; and having established this, he exclaims, "How light and easy is the Lord's yoke!" (22.)

And elsewhere: "We are not obliged to give alms of our *superfluity in the ordinary necessities* of the poor; if it were otherwise, we should condemn the greater part of rich persons and their Confessors." (11.)

These sophistries tried my patience, and I said to the father, "But what prevents our saying that they are so?" "This has been provided for in the same passage," he replied, "where, after it is said,—If that were true, the richest persons would be damned:" he adds, "To this Arragonius replies that they are so; and Baunez further declares that their Confessors are equally so: but I reply with Valentia, another Jesuit, and other writers, that there are *various excuses to be made for the rich and their Confessors.*" (22.)

I was delighted with this reasoning, when he concluded by saying,

"If this opinion in regard to restitution were just, *how many restitutions* would be required!"

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"My good father," I said, "your reasons are excellent!" "Ah!" he replied, "he is indeed an indulgent person!" "I see plainly," I rejoined, "that without you casuists, all the world would be damned! How wide have you made the road to Heaven! O, how many will now be able to find it! Here is one . . . . . ."

## VI.

What have you gained by accusing me of jesting at sacred things? As little will you gain by your charges of misrepresentation. (Erased.)

— I have not revealed the whole; this you will soon perceive. (Erased.)

— I am no heretic; I have not maintained the five propositions. You assert it, but without proof. I affirm that you have said thus, and I prove it.*

— Do you threaten me?

— I tell you, you are impostors. I prove it; and you do not deny, but rather, insolently avow the fact.— Brisacier, Minier, D'Alby.

— When you considered M. Puys† an enemy to the Society, he was a bad pastor,—ignorant, heretical, of evil faith and conversation. Now he is an excellent pastor,—pure in faith and morals!

— As you have arraigned only this point, it follows that you assent to all the rest.

— To calumniate, "*hæc est magna cæcitas cordis.*"

* In the margin is, "*Ex Senatusconsultis et plebiscitis. Demander des passages pareils.*"

† M. Puys was curate of St. Nisier, at Lyons. For his dispute with the Jesuits, see 15th Provincial.

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Not to see its criminality, "*hæc est major cæcitas cordis.*"

To justify, rather than confess it as a crime, "*hæc tunc hominem concludit profunditas iniquitatis,*" &c.—2. 30. Prosper.

— Persons of high station take their different sides in civil wars; so do you in the *civil war of man.*

— I wish to assert these things to your face, that they may come with more force. (Erased.)

— I am sure of the approbation of those who examine books for themselves. But those who only look at the title-pages,—and they are the most numerous,—such persons may rely on your word, not supposing that religious professors could be guilty of imposition . . . . . * (Erased.)

— Not that I do not perceive how much you are embarrassed. For if you were willing to retract, that would be completed, but, &c. (Erased.)

— Saints refine in the scrutiny of their conduct, in order to discover cause of blame in themselves, and charge their best actions with guilt. But these practise refinements to excuse the most culpable.

— A building fair to the eye, but upon a weak foundation; such the heathen sages erected; and the devil deceives men by this appearance of solidity, where the foundation is the most unsound.

— Never had any one so good a cause as I; and never have any furnished so good a mark as yourselves.

* Here are some illegible words.

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— People of the world do not believe themselves to be in the right way.

— Do not flatter yourselves that this matter shall remain in dispute; we will have your works, complete and entire, published in *French*, and then all the world shall judge for themselves.

— I beg every one will do me the justice not to believe them any longer on their own word.

— The more they regard me as weak, individually, the more authority they contribute to my cause.

— You say I am a heretic. Is that decent? If you are not afraid that I shall receive justice from man, have you no fear of the retribution of God?

— You shall feel the force of truth, and bow to it!

— You would compel the world to believe you, on pain of mortal sin.

— It is sinful to give a hasty belief to slander. ("*Non credebitur temerè calumniatori.*" St. Aug.) ("*Fecitque cadendo undique me cadere,*" by the maxims of slander.)

— There is something supernatural in such blindness. "*Digna necessitas.*"

— "*Mentiris impudentissime.*"

— 230. The extremity of guilt is to defend it. *Elidere.*

— 340. 23. The good fortune of the wicked.

— "*Doctrinâ suâ noscitur vir.*"

— 66. "*Labor mendacii.*"

— Simulated piety, a double crime.

— Am I alone against thirty thousand? No. Do *you* keep possession of the court, and entrench yourselves in imposture: my support be truth! *There* is all my

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strength: if I lose that, I am lost indeed! I shall have no lack of charges, and persecution. But truth is on my side; and we will see which of us shall prevail!

I am an unworthy defender of religion; but you are also unworthy defenders of error and injustice. May God, in his mercy, disregarding what is evil in me, and looking complacently upon what is good in you, grant us both his grace, that truth may not suffer in my hands, and that falsehood may not * . . . . . .

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## VII.

And they set themselves to chase away from the church those who refuse to make this acknowledgment; in *v* (Erased.) . . .

Every one declares they are so.†

M. Arnaud and his friends protest they condemn them in themselves, and wherever found: if they are in Jansenius, they condemn them; if not there, provided the heretical meaning condemned by the Pope in these propositions be in Jansenius, then he condemns Jansenius.

But you are not satisfied with these protestations; you require him to admit that the propositions are word for word in Jansenius. He replied, he cannot affirm this, not knowing whether they be so or not; that he has looked for them, as well as a multitude of others, without

* These words finish page 398 in the MS. The sentence was doubtless continued on another page, which is lost.

† The Five Propositions are no doubt meant. The beginning of this fragment is wanting in the MS.

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being able to find them. They have entreated you, and all your party, to furnish them with the passages in which they are contained: no one has done so. And yet you would, on the ground of this refusal, cut him off from the church—although he condemns all that she condemns—for this sole reason, that he does not affirm certain words, or a certain meaning, to be contained in a book, in which he has never found them, nor will any one point them out to him. Truly, my father, so futile is this pretext, that the church, perhaps, never exhibited a proceeding so remarkable, so unjust, and so precipitate, that* . . . . . .

The church may well compel . . . (Erased.)

— It is not necessary to be a theologian, to perceive that their heresy consists only in their opposition to yourselves. I experience the same thing myself, and it will be the experience of all who have ventured to attack you.

The Curates of Rouen, Jansenists.

You deem your objects so just, that you make them matter of prayer!

Two years ago their heresy consisted in the Bull; last year it was the *internal* meaning; for these six months past it has been in the "*totidem*;"† now it is in the interpretation.

— Do I not plainly see that you are determined to bring them in heretics?—St. Sacrament.

— I have embroiled myself in taking up the cause of others.

* The remainder is wanting in the MS.

† That is, "*word for word.*" See Provincial XVII.



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— You are supremely ridiculous in the clamour you make about these propositions. It is all for nothing.

They must be made to listen.

— . . . . Without the names of the authors; but as they saw through your design, seventy were found to oppose you.

— To date the decree.

— In order that the man whom you could not convict of heresy on his own words, &c.

— . . . . . .* that all these statements, even the most horrible, should proceed from your authors! (Erased.)

— For every one knows.

— Have you no other reply, and no better proof than this? (Erased.)

— Whether he know, or do not know, or be in doubt; whether a sinner or a heretic.

— That illumination which reveals to us truths that lie beyond our understanding, reveals them free from error, whereas . . . . .

— As for me, I would rather be unjustly, &c. . . (Erased.)

— A band of reprobates.

— All the boxes of St. Mary might be opened without proving you less innocent. (Erased.)

— What is your reason for this? You say I am a Jansenist; that the Port Royal maintains the Five Propositions; and therefore I maintain them. Here are three falsehoods.

— I beg you will not pretend to say, it is not you who

* Three words illegible.

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have caused all this to be done. Spare me the necessity of a reply; it would be such as would not be agreeable to yourselves, or to others. (Erased.)

— There are two things which the Pope has not condemned: he has condemned only the interpretation of the Five Propositions. Will you say he has not condemned it? But the meaning of Jansenius is included in it, says the Pope. I see plainly the Pope supposes this, because of your "*totidem.*" But he has not said this, under pain of excommunication.

How could he, and the bishops of France, do otherwise than believe this? You had pronounced your "*totidem,*" and they little knew that you were capable of affirming such a thing to be the fact, when it was in reality not so! Impostors that you are! They had not seen my fifteenth Letter.

— How could the meaning of Jansenius be in the propositions, when they are none of his?

Either the matter in question is in Jansenius, or not. If it is there, that condemns it; if not, for what is he to be condemned?

Let them condemn one of your propositions in Escobar. I will take in one hand Escobar, in the other the Censure, and produce a formal argument from the two.

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## VIII.

On hearing the report of the Feuillants * . . . . I communicated it to an old friend of mine: speaking of

* A religious order.



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devotion, he fancied that I held some sentiments of the same kind, and might become a Feuillant myself.

And that I might do some service as a writer—especially in these times—against modern innovations.

* . . . . . *fait*, lately against your Chapter-General, which is that they should subscribe the Bull.

That he could wish that God might aid me with his inspirations.

Father, must he subscribe?

---

"It is obvious," said the Feuillant, "that the point is not so clear, for controversy indicates doubt."

St. Athanasius, St. Chrysostom. Morality, infidels.

— The Jesuits have not succeeded in rendering truth doubtful, but they have left no doubt of *their* impiety.

Contradictions have ever existed, to perplex the wicked.

Everything that offends truth or charity, is evil. This is an undoubted axiom.

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## IX.

### *Notes for a Nineteenth Provincial.*†

— The day of judgment.

— This then, my father, is what you call the meaning of Jansenius; this is what you palm off as such, both to the Pope and the bishops.

— If the Jesuits were corrupt, and it were true that we stood alone, the more reason have we to remain as we are.

* Two illegible words.

† The original of these notes was furnished in the Appendix to Provincial Letters. No. VIII.

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— "*Quod bellum firmavit, pax ficta non auferat.*"

— "*Neque benedictione, neque maledictione movetur, sicut angelus domini.*"

— They attack the greatest of Christian principles, which is the love of truth.

— If the signature bears this meaning, let them suffer us to explain it, that there may be no ambiguity; for it cannot be doubted that many believe the signature to imply a consent.

— We are not blameable for not believing; but we should be blameable to swear without believing.

— But you may be deceived? I swear that I believe I may be deceived: but I do not swear that I believe I am deceived.

— If the "*rapporteur*" were not to sign, the decree would be invalid; if the Bull were not signed, it would be good; it is not then . . . .

— That puts them in the ascendant with Escobar; but they do not take it thus: and evincing their concern to find themselves in a conflict between God and the Pope . . . . .

— I am grieved to be obliged to tell you all this: I give a simple narrative.

---

*Isolated Note.* (page 110. MS. *aut.*)

We ought, my father, to judge Divine ordinances with sobriety.* (Erased.)

St. Paul in the island of Malta. (Erased.)

* This is almost identical with the title of Ch. xxxi., Book 1, of Montaigne, "That we ought to set about soberly in judging of Divine ordinances."

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# THOUGHTS

ON

# THE POPE AND THE CHURCH.

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THE latter and most finished portion of this section, the greater part of which, however, has not been before published, appeared first in Bossut's edition, under the title, "Comparison of the Ancient Christians with those of the present day."

This piece is not found in the autograph MS. or the copy, but it is in the three following MSS.: namely, "*Suppl. Franç.*" No. 176. This is a very indifferent copy, without any title. At the close, is the following note:—"To this piece may be given some such title as this,—What are the causes of the indifference and deficient instruction of Christians in the present day?" This note leads to the belief that this fragment is one of the *two minor compositions*, which the Abbé Perier communicated, in 1711, to the Benedictine Dom Touttée, and at the foot of which the latter had "placed nearly the same title." Second, The little MS. in 8vo. with this title:—"Reflections on the manner in which admission was formerly obtained into the church; and how those so admitted conducted themselves: how they are admitted, and what their conduct in the present day." This copy is also incorrect, and several paragraphs are transposed. Third, The first MS. Collection of P. Guerrier, bearing the inscription, "Another writing of M. Pascal."

It is the text of this last that we have adopted, as the most correct of all; attaching to it the title which it bears in the small 8vo. MS. To conclude, however, the composition is not preserved in a perfect state in any of the MSS. There are several breaks, (*lacunes,*) all traces of which Bossut has removed; but which we have thought it right to indicate, in conformity with M. Guerrier's copy, wherein, with his usual accuracy, the marks are preserved by points.

(*French Editor.*)

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A VERY few portions of the remarks in this section have, as far as I have been able to discover, found their way into former collections of Pascal's writings, and the whole will be found well to deserve attention. It would not be suitable to the uncontroversial character of this work, to draw elaborate inferences from this series of reflections, adverse to Pascal's



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adherence to the Romanist system of faith. But it must occur to every reader, that upon many of its distinctive articles, his opinions were, at least, in a transition-state; and, in regard to some even, gradually approximating to an enlightened view of the fallibility of merely human systems, and a tempered right of private judgment.

His ardent concern for the interests of true religion, irrespective of its subordinate modifications, is also conspicuous in every part of these pleasing meditations. And it is equally clear, that, had he been able to foresee the controversies which have lately agitated the Church, even in Protestant communions, his voice would have been raised in favour of the great essentials of religion, as outweighing all external observances, however important in themselves; and even its most essential and divinely instituted rites would have been regarded by him as inefficacious, if not followed by a true conversion of the heart to God, and an implicit reception of the terms upon which alone man's eternal welfare can be secured.

These sections will nearly close the present volume, and form a not unsuitable introduction to the one to follow; in which will be furnished the "Thoughts upon the Christian Religion," together with other papers of a theological character. In these writings will be seen, more clearly, perhaps, than heretofore, what was the faith into which this great man is charged, by the philosophy of a modern school, with taking refuge from the disquietudes of a universal scepticism; how large were its views, how deep its foundation, and how catholic its aims. They will exhibit him, wasting under disease, but exulting in the prospect of an everlasting exemption from infirmity and sorrow; and, while the shadowy objects of earth were losing their importance in his view, absorbed and filled with the realities of eternity. They will show him, after exploring all human philosophy, finding truth alone in the pages of a Divine inspiration; and the acknowledged leader of his day in learning and science—experiencing his highest joy in devoting all the efforts of his great capacity to the spiritual improvement of his fellow-men.

(*Translator.*)

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# THOUGHTS

ON

# THE POPE AND THE CHURCH.

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## I. *Church. Pope.*

UNITY, multitude. Considering the Church in its unity, the Pope, for the time being, is head over all; and as it were, everything. Considering it in multitude, the Pope is but a part.

+ The Fathers have considered it sometimes in the one light, sometimes in the other.

+ And thus they have spoken variously of the Pope.

+ St. Cyprian: "*Sacerdos Dei.*"

+ But in maintaining one of these two truths, they have not excluded the other.

Multitude, when not reduced to unity, becomes confusion; unity, which depends not upon multitude, is tyranny.

+ Nowhere scarcely, but in France, is it allowed to say the council is superior to the Pope.

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II. We are not to judge of the Papal office by a few expressions of the Fathers, (as the Greeks stated in a council—an important rule!) but by the uniform tenor of the church, and the Fathers, and by the canons.

— The Pope is the head. Who else is there that is

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known of all? Who also is acknowledged by all? Insinuating himself through the whole body, holding the master-key, which commands everything.

† How easily might all this degenerate into *tyranny!* Therefore Jesus Christ has left this precept:—"*Vos autem non sic.*"

—† Unity and multitude: "DUO AUT TRES IN UNUM." It is an error, to exclude either of the two, like the Papists, who exclude the multitude; or the Huguonots, who exclude unity.

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III. † The Pope dislikes and fears the learned,* who are not attached to the See by vows.

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IV. † Kings can dispose of their sovereignties; but Popes cannot dispose of theirs.

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V. We desiderate certainty. We like that the Pope should be infallible in the faith, and that learned doctors† should be the like in morals; and then we are secure.

---

VI. God does not work miracles in the ordinary course of things in his church. It would be remarkable if infallibility were to be found in one individual; but that it should be found in a multitude seems so natural, that

* "*Les savants;*" the copies have here "*les souverains,*" in contradiction to the MS.

† The allusion is quietly ironical, to the *learned doctors of probability.* This is the remark of the French Editor; but is there not a degree of irony also in the satisfaction asserted at the infallibility of the Pope? (Transl.)

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the intervention of Divinity is concealed in nature, as in all his other works.

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VII. † In the Bull, "*Cum ex apostolatus officio*," by Paul IV., published in 1558:—

† "We order and command, that every one of those who have wandered, or fallen into heresy or schism, of whatsoever condition, lay, ecclesiastical, bishops, archbishops, patriarchs, primates, cardinals, counts, marquises, dukes, kings and emperors; besides the sentences and penalties subjoined, be absolutely deprived, wholly, and entirely, of their orders, sees, benefices, offices, kingdoms, empires; and incapable of enjoying them again for evermore.

† "We further abandon such persons to the secular authorities for punishment; and we grant no other mercy to those who in sincere penitence would retract their errors, except that, by the benignity and clemency of the Holy See, they may, if thought deserving, be permitted to be shut up in a monastery, there to do *perpetual* penance on bread and water; but ever to remain deprived of all dignity, order, prelature, county, duchy, kingdom. And all who shall conceal and defend them shall be adjudged excommunicated, and infamous; deprived of all royalties, states, goods and possessions, which shall be the right and property of all who shall first get possession of them."*

† . . . . . *23 q. 5. d'Urbain II.* "*Non eos homicidas reputamus quod adversus excom-*

* The Bull here quoted by Pascal, is not that of 1558, but of March, 1559, under the following title, in the Collection:—"*Innovatio quarumcumque censurarum*," &c. Tom. iv., p. 354.

† Some illegible words.

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*municatos zelo catholicæ matris ardentes aliquem eorum trucidasse contigerit.*"

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(In the margin of the preceding passage are the following notes:—)

† After having thoroughly tormented you, they will send you home again. (Erased.)

— † It is as poor a consolation as that of the abuse of appeals—for it is a great instrument of abuse; besides that most of them will not have means to defray a journey from the farthest parts of Périgord or Anjou, to plead before the Parliament at Paris, and will always have to encounter arrests of judgment, which will be procured against their appeals. (Erased.)

— † For, although they may not obtain their object, the very endeavour is an indication of their power, which is so great as to induce them to make demands so unjust, that it is evident to all that they cannot be conceded. (Erased.)

— † This only serves more plainly to discover their objects, and the necessity of not permitting the registration of the Bull, which they are aiming to make the foundation of this novel institution. (Erased.)

† This is not a simple Bull, but a foundation. (Erased.)

— † On leaving the court. (Erased.)*

* It is evident, although it seems to have escaped the acuteness of the French Editor, that all these passages following the bull,—"*Cum ex*," &c., have reference to the 20th Provincial Letter, on the contemplated French Inquisition; which, though supposed to be principally written by Nicole, is proved by these memoranda, (as has been elsewhere stated,) to have been published with the sanction and assistance of Pascal: for some of the expressions in these rough notes are, *verbatim*, to be found in that paper. See Preface to Provincial Letters. (Transl.)

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— † 121. The Pope forbids the King to give his children in marriage without his permission. 1294.

— . . . * 124. 1302.

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VIII. † If the ancient church was in error, she has fallen. Although she exists at the present day, she is not the same, for she possesses the advantage of the traditions derived from antiquity; and thus, this submission and conformity to the ancient church regulates and corrects everything. But the ancient church did not contemplate the nature and constitution of that which was to come, in the way in which we contemplate the past.

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IX. † The church has invented in vain the terms, anathema, heresy, &c. They are made to serve against her.

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X. The way in which the church has been maintained is, by holding truth to be not subject to question; or, if questioned, then there was the Pope,—otherwise there was the church.

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XI. † The church has always been assailed by opposing errors; but, probably, never so much so as now. Yet if she now suffers more from the multiplicity of errors, she derives from them this advantage,—that they destroy each other.

— † She complains of both; but much more of Calvinists, on account of their schismatical tendencies.

* Illegible words.

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— † It is certain that many on the opposing sides are deceived; they must be disabused.

— † Faith admits many truths seemingly contradictory:—"Time to laugh, to weep," &c. "*Respondere ne respondeas*," &c.

— † The origin of this is the union of two natures in Christ.

— † And so of the two worlds. The creation of a new heaven and a new earth; new life new death; everything duplicated; and yet the same names remaining.

— † And, finally, the two natures (*deux hommes*) in the righteous; for they are the two worlds, and members and types of Jesus Christ. And analogous to this are all the terms employed;—such as justified sinners, living death, dying life, elect sinner, &c.

XII. — There is then a great number of truths, both in faith and morals, which seem antagonistic, and yet harmonize in admirable order.

— The source of all heresies is the exclusion of some one of these truths; and the source of all the cavils brought against us by heretics, is their ignorance of some one of these truths.

— And it usually happens that, being unable to perceive the relation of two opposing truths, and believing that the admission of the one involves the exclusion of the other, they adhere to the one and renounce the other; and fancy that we do the contrary. Now this exclusion is the source of their heresy, and the ignorance we have shown them to labour under, the ground of their cavils.

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† 1st Example. Christ is God and man. The Arians, unable to combine these things, which they hold to be incompatible, say, he is man: therein they are orthodox. But they deny him to be God: herein they are heretical. They pretend that we deny his humanity: therein they show their ignorance.

† 2d Example. Respecting the Sacrament:—

We believe that the substance of the bread being changed, and being consubstantially in that of the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, it is really present in it. This is one truth. Another is, that this sacrament is also one of the types of the cross and the glory, and a commemoration of both. This is the Catholic faith, which comprehends the two truths seemingly opposed to each other.

The modern heretics, not understanding that this sacrament contains both the presence of Christ and its type, and that it is both a sacrifice and a commemoration of a sacrifice, believe that the one of these truths cannot be admitted without necessarily excluding the other.

They make their stand upon this one point,—that this sacrament is figurative; and therein they are not heretical. They think we exclude this truth; and thence it is that they bring so many objections to the passages in the Fathers which affirm it. Lastly, they deny the presence; and in that are heretics.

† 3d Example. Indulgences.*

* Unfortunately this topic is not followed out. Pascal's illustration of such a subject would have been an intellectual curiosity, and probably fenced round with much of that reservation which his high moral standard, and enlightened and *scriptural* views, would have dictated: yet what would he have made of it? And who ever exposed more unsparingly, in his other writings, the abuses to which the practice gives rise? (Transl.)

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— Therefore it is that the shortest way to prevent heresies is to instruct men in every kind of truth; and the surest way to refute them, is to declare it as universally.

+ For what say the heretics?

— + To ascertain whether an opinion be from one of the Fathers. . . . . .

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+ The error they all fall into, is the more dangerous, from each pursuing *one* truth: their fault is not in adopting falsehood, but in not embracing the countervailing truth.

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XIII. There is a pleasure in being in a vessel tossed by storms, if we can be satisfied that we shall not perish. The persecutions which agitate the church are of this nature.

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XIV. The history of the church might more properly be called the history of the truth.

---

XV. Priests of all sorts of people, as under Jeroboam.

+ It is shocking to be told, as in the present day,— the discipline of the church is so good, that it would be criminal to propose changes. Formerly it was infallibly good, and yet we find that it admitted of changes; and now, being what it is, we are not to desire any change!

+ It has been allowed to degenerate from the practice which then prevailed, of appointing to the priesthood with so much circumspection, that instances of unworthiness were most rare; and *we* are not now to be allowed

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to mourn the laxity by which so many that are unworthy of the office are appointed!

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XVI. † God has not permitted absolution to be given without the intervention of the church; as it is she who resents the offence, so should she have part in the pardon. The Divine will has associated her in this prerogative, as sovereigns do their parliaments; but if the church absolve or bind *without God,* it is no longer the act of the church. So it is with the parliament; although the king may have pardoned a criminal, the act must be regularly enrolled; but if the parliament enrol such act without the king, or refuse to enrol on the order of the king, it is no longer done by the royal parliament, but by an illegal assembly.

---

XVII. † It is not the absolution alone which remits sin in the sacrament of penance; but penitence, which is not valid if it does not avail itself of the sacrament.

† So it is not the mere nuptial benediction which serves to obviate sin in bringing a progeny into the world; but a desire to bring up our children for God, which can only be sincere in the marriage state.

---

XVIII. † The church teaches, and God gives his inspiration;—both, with infallibility. The office of the church is only to prepare for pardon or condemnation. What she does suffices for condemnation, not for inspiration (" *suffit pour condamner, non pour inspirer*").

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XIX. † On confessions and absolutions without signs of sorrow:—

God alone sees the heart of man; the church can judge only of his external conduct. God pardons as soon as he discerns penitence in the heart; the church when she sees it in the life. God can make a church so pure within, that it may confound, by its internal and spiritual sanctity, the internal impiety of proud sages and pharisees; and the church can produce a body of men, whose external conduct may be so pure, as to confound the morality of the heathen. If, among them, there be hypocrites, but so disguised that the church cannot detect the imposture, she endures them; for although they cannot deceive God, they may escape the eye of man. Thus she suffers no dishonour from a conduct on the part of her members which bears the appearance of sanctity.

But you desire that the church should judge, neither of the interior, because that belongs only to God,—nor of the exterior, because God has to do only with the interior; and thus, taking from him all concernment with man, you leave in the church the most abandoned persons; and such as the Jewish synagogues and the ancient sects would have abhorred as impious, and chased from their societies as unworthy! *

---

† Thus, if it be true, on the one hand, that some lax professors, and some currupt casuists, not members of the hierarchy, have wallowed in defilement; it is not to be

* The MS. has only these words:—"but you desire that the church" . . . the rest of the page is torn off. The remainder of the passage, as given above, is found in the copy.

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denied, that the true pastors of the church, and the authorized depositaries of divine truth, have unflinchingly defended her against all the efforts of those who have conspired for her overthrow.

† Therefore the faithful have no pretence to follow the laxities propounded to them so profanely, on the part of these casuists, instead of the pure doctrine presented by the paternal solicitudes of their own pastors. And the impious and heretical have no ground for adducing these abuses, as showing a defect in the care of God over his own church; for the church, being properly contained in the hierarchy, so far from concluding, from the existing state of things, that she is abandoned to abuses, never was it more apparent than at this time, that God is defending her from corruption.

† For, if it have happened that certain of those who, by an extraordinary call, have professed to forsake the world, and to assume a religious profession, in order to live by stricter rules than the generality of Christians,—if any of these have fallen into enormities which excite the horror of the pious, and have become, among ourselves, what the false prophets were to the Jews;—this is an individual and personal calamity, which must indeed be deplored, but which justifies no conclusions against the care of God for his church. All these things are clearly predicted, and it has ever been announced that such trials would arise on the part of men of this description; and persons well instructed see in them marks of God's providential government, rather than of his forgetfulness of the church.

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+ You show yourselves ignorant of the prophecies, if you know not that all this must come to pass:—princes, prophets, popes, and even priests. And yet the church abides. It is by God's grace that we are not of the number. Woe to such priests! Yet let us hope, that the mercy of our God will still preserve us from their guilt.

1 St. Peter, ch. ii. False prophets in times past, types of those to come.

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XXI. What impairs our powers of comparing the past transactions of the church with what we see around us is, that we are accustomed to regard St. Athanasius, St. Theresa, and others, as persons crowned with glory, . . . . .* and like a species of divinities. Now that time has cleared up many things, this also is made plain to us. At the period of his persecutions this great saint was simply a man called Athanasius, and St. Theresa a maiden. "Elias was a man of *like* passions with ourselves," says St. Peter,† in order to disabuse the Christians of that false idea which led them to reject the example of the saints, as disproportioned to our attainments.—"Ah, those were saints," we cry; "they were not persons like ourselves!"

+ But what really occurred at that time? St. Athanasius was a man named Athanasius, accused of various crimes, condemned by such and such councils, for such and such offences. All the bishops concurred, and

* Some words illegible.

† These words attributed by Pascal to St. Peter, are from St. James, Ch. v. 7.

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finally the Pope. What was said of those who resisted? That they disturbed the public peace, were guilty of schism, &c.

+ There were then four sorts of characters: there was zeal without knowledge; knowledge without zeal; neither knowledge nor zeal; both zeal and knowledge. The three first condemn him; the last acquit him,—are excommunicated from the church,—and yet were the saviours of the church from whose bosom they were banished!

— + Zeal, illumination.

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# REFLECTIONS

## ON THE MANNER IN WHICH CONVERTS WERE FORMERLY RECEIVED INTO THE CHURCH; HOW THEY THEN CONDUCTED THEMSELVES; HOW THEY ENTER, AND CONDUCT THEMSELVES IN IT AT THE PRESENT TIME.*

In the early ages, Christians were thoroughly instructed in all things necessary for salvation; whereas we, at present, witness such gross ignorance, as to cause deep affliction to all who feel regard and affection for the church.

Admission was then obtained into the church only after severe efforts and long-continued desires; now, men find an entrance without trouble, care, or labour.

Converts were then not received without very strict examination. Now, they are received even before they are in a state to be examined.

They were then not admitted, until they had abjured their former mode of life; and had renounced the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Now, they enter without being in a condition of mind to do any of these things.

Lastly, it was in those times necessary to forsake the world, in order to be received into the church; at the present day, on the other hand, the church is entered simultaneously with the world. It was seen, by the

* MS. Coll. of P. Guerrier, p. 227.

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former procedure, how essentially different were the world and the church.

They were then regarded as opposed to each other, as irreconcilable enemies; the one of which was the object of exterminable persecution from the other; and the weaker of the two, to appearance, destined one day to triumph over the stronger. Thus, the one of these opposing parties was always quitted, on going over to the other; the principles of the one were abandoned, on embracing the principles of the other; men divested themselves of the views of the one, when they took up the views of the other: in short, they forsook, they renounced, they abjured the world, in which they had had their first birth, in order to devote themselves entirely to the church, in which they obtained a second birth. In this way was realized the solemn difference between the world and the church; whereas, at the present day, people find themselves, at the same time, in both the one and the other: the same moment that sees our birth in the world, is that of our second birth in the church; and thus, when reason supervenes, she discovers no distinction between these opposing spheres. She receives her growth in both at once. We partake of the sacraments, and we enjoy, at the same time, the pleasures of the world; and thus, while formerly an immeasurable distinction was preserved between the one and the other, now they are blended, confounded,—and all distinction is lost.

Thence it was that, in former times, none were found among the ranks of Christianity, but those who were well instructed in its truths; now, the ignorance that



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prevails is frightful. Thence it was, that those regenerated by baptism, and who had forsaken the vicious practices of the world for the devoutness of the church, so rarely relapsed from the church to the world; now, on the other hand, nothing is more common than to see the vices of the world cherished in the very heart of Christians.

The holiness of the church is utterly sullied by the debasements of the wicked: and her own children, born and nourished from their infancy in her bosom, are those who lay bare her inmost recesses—the celebration of her most august mysteries—to the invasion of her deadly enemies, worldliness of spirit, ambition, revenge, impurity, concupiscence: while the love borne by the church to her children compels her to admit, without resistance, these her most cruel persecutors.

But it is not the church to which we ought to impute the evils which have ensued upon this abandonment of so salutary a discipline: she has never changed in spirit, although she may have changed in conduct. Considering that the postponement of baptism left large numbers of children under the curse of Adam, she was desirous of delivering them from the danger of perdition to which they were exposed, by hastening her succour; and now, that tender Parent sees, with deep concern, that the means by which she sought the salvation of the children, has occasioned the ruin of the adults.

Her real intention is, that those whom she withdraws, at so tender an age, from the contamination of the world, should embrace sentiments wholly opposed to those of the world. She anticipates the development of

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reason, in order to prevent the vices which a corrupted reason brings with it; and, before their minds ripen into activity, she would fill them with her influences,—that they may remain in ignorance of the world, remote from her vices, and even unconscious of their existence. This is evident from the ceremonies in use in baptism: for the sacrament is only administered to children, on a declaration, by the mouth of their sponsors, that they desire admission into the church,—that they are believers, —that they renounce the world and the devil. And, as the church desires that they should retain these dispositions to the end of their existence, she expressly commands the inviolable observance of them; and directs their sponsors, as an indispensable condition, to instruct the children in these holy things. For she desires not that those whom she has nursed in her bosom should, in these days, be less instructed and less zealous, than the adults who were of old admitted to her communion; she would not allow of lower attainments in those she has herself nourished, than in those whom she had thus received . . . . . *

Yet is all this perverted from the intentions of the church; and we feel oppressed in the contemplation of our degeneracy. We seem, as it were, to value no longer this great benefit, because we did not ourselves desiderate it, because we did not personally solicit it, because we cannot even recall the fact of its reception . . . . . †

But as it is evident that the church does not require

* A break here occurs in the MS. † Idem.



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a lower degree of zeal in those whom she has brought up and domesticated in the faith, than in such as are seeking admission into it, these latter ought to keep their eye upon the example of the catechumens, and mark their ardour, their devotion, their dread of the world, and magnanimous renouncement of its delights; and, if they are not deemed worthy of baptism without such dispositions, surely those who cannot discover such in themselves . . . . . .

. . . . . *

They ought then to submit to receive the instructions, which would have been given them had they been now first entering into communion with the church; they must further practise habitual penitence, and feel less aversion to austerity and mortification; they must cease to delight in the poisoned charms of sin † . . . . .

. . . . . .

To dispose them to receive due instruction, they ought to be made to understand the difference of the customs observed by the church in successive periods . . . .

. . . . . ‡ that, in the early days of the church, the catechumens (that is, those who aspired to baptism) were examined previous to the rite; and were not admitted without receiving full instructions in the mysteries of religion; without evincing sincere penitence for sin;

* Break in MS.

† In the small MS. in 8vo. there is the following version of this passage, but which seems to have been erased in the original MS:—"And they must further submit to penitence, till they conquer all desire to reject it, and till they find less and less aversion to austerity and mortification, and feel no pleasure in the vicious delights of sin." The MS., *Sup. Franc.*, 167, alone furnishes this version.

‡ Blank.

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without acquiring a large acquaintance with the greatness and excellence of the profession of faith and doctrine into which they sought an entrance; without showing sensible marks of a true conversion of heart, and an earnest desire of participation in the rite. These things being palpable to the whole church, the sacrament was conferred upon them, as an act of incorporation and admission to membership in the church; but, in these times, baptism being administered (for important reasons) to infants before the development of reason, it too often happens that, through the negligence of parents, youth are suffered to grow up to maturity without any sufficient knowledge of the great truths of religion.

When instruction was a pre-requisite for baptism, all were instructed; but now that baptism precedes instruction, the requisite teaching is left to the will of the individual, and is thence neglected and almost abandoned.

The real cause of this is, that baptism is believed to be indispensable, but not instruction. Therefore, when instruction preceded the rite, the necessity of the one involved a necessary recourse to the other; but now, as baptism precedes instruction, as a Christian may be *made* without knowledge, so it is supposed that he may *remain* a Christian without instruction . . . . . .

. . . . . .

And while the early Christians evinced the deepest gratitude to the church, for a benefit conferred by her only after prolonged solicitation; an equal insensibility is now shown for the like benefit which is conferred before the candidate is even capable, in his own

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person, of applying for the rite. And if the church resented so strongly the instances, though rare, of falling away among the former, how much must she hold in abhorrence the declensions and perpetual relapses of the latter,—whose obligations are the deeper, inasmuch as they have been so much earlier, and by a freer grace, delivered from the ruin in which they were involved by the condition of their natural birth! She cannot see without dismay her choicest benefits thus abused, and all her labours for the salvation of her children made the almost certain instrument of their destruction; for she has not . . . . . .*

*(Note of P. Guerrier.)* "I have transcribed this short essay from two copies, scarcely legible, and almost decayed by the effect of time."

* Bossut thus finishes the paragraph:—"for she has not *changed in spirit, although her customs have changed.*"

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# CONVERSATION

ON

# HIS WORK ON RELIGION.

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I HAVE thought it better to bring this paper at present before the reader, although it was intended, as before stated, to reserve it for a subsequent volume. It is extracted from the Introduction prefixed by Pascal's literary friends to their first publication of his Works, and is probably the composition of Nicole, or De Saci. For a more particular description of the circumstances under which this conversation took place, the reader is referred to the "Memoir," in a former volume. It occurred when Pascal was in about his thirtieth year; and, consequently, rather less than ten years before his death.

"This is the short abstract which has been handed down of the Plan of Pascal's work: and, short as it is, it gives us some faint view of the comprehensiveness of his genius,—of the grasp that he had of his subject,—and of the irresistible mass of evidence in existence for the support of the Christian religion, if it could be thus brought to bear upon the question by the energies of one great mind, adapted for the purpose."—Craig's Mem. of Pascal. (Transl.)

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# NARRATIVE

## OF A CONVERSATION IN WHICH PASCAL RELATED THE PLAN AND SUBSTANCE OF HIS CONTEMPLATED WORK ON RELIGION.

It happened on a certain occasion, about ten or twelve years since, that M. Pascal was induced to deliver what he had revolved in his mind upon the subject above referred to, in the way of verbal relation. It was done in the presence, and at the request of, several of his friends; and, among them, some of considerable distinction. He unfolded to them on this occasion, in a few words, the plan of his entire work; he described the subject, and the proposed matter; briefly recapitulated the reasons which had induced the undertaking, and the principles upon which it was to be founded; and explained the order and connexion he intended to pursue. And those persons, than whom none were more competent to judge of these things, reported that they never heard a more beautiful address, or one more powerful, affecting, and convincing. They were delighted with what they heard; and from the specimen thus afforded, in a discourse carried on for a period of between two and three hours, delivered on the spur of the moment, and without effort or premeditation, they drew the most exalted conclusions of the projected work, if it should ever be carried into full execution by one with whose powers they were so well acquainted, one so matured in literary composition, and one, especially, whose fastidiousness of taste in his writings was so great. He was, indeed, rarely satisfied with his



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first conceptions, however good they might appear to others; and was accustomed to transcribe as frequently as six or eight times, compositions which ordinary readers deemed as perfect as they could be from their very first transmission to paper.

After having explained to his hearers what kind of demonstrations were wont the most to impress, and produce conviction in the minds of men, he proceeded to show that the Christian religion bore marks of authority and certainty as great as any of those things which are received by mankind as most indubitable and established.

He opened his scheme by drawing a portraiture of man; in which he omitted nothing that could contribute, externally or internally, to a faithful resemblance, even to the most secret recesses and movements of the heart. He then supposed the case of a man, who, having passed his life in ignorance of and indifference to everything, and especially himself, is brought, at length, to contemplate himself by this portraiture, and to consider what he really is. In this review, he discovers with surprise a multitude of things upon which he had never before reflected. A vivid representation, and one that excited the astonishment and admiration of all, was made by the speaker, of both the grandeur and the baseness of man; of his capabilities and his feebleness; the uncertainties and obscurity which surround him on all sides; and the endless contradictions which cross and mingle in his nature. The least enlightened could not, after such a revelation, relapse into indifference; and however insensible they might heretofore have been, they could not

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but desire, after being thus shown their present state, to know more of the original purposes of their creation, and their future destiny.

M. Pascal having succeeded in exciting a desire to seek the solution of these momentous uncertainties, addressed himself first to those of philosophical minds: and, after unfolding to them all that the most eminent teachers of every sect had inculcated upon the subject of man, he showed such defects, such inconclusiveness, so many contradictions, and so much falsehood, in all their theories, as to make it evident to persons of that description, that it was not in such instructors that any confidence was to be placed.

He then made them accompany him in a survey of all the countries of the world, and all periods of time, and observe the infinitude of religious systems that had prevailed: but he led them to see at the same time, that all these systems so abound with vanity, folly, errors, sophistry, and extravagance, that there is nothing in them really satisfying to the soul.

He then called their attention to the Jewish nation, and fixed their view on the extraordinary circumstances of their history. After describing all the singularities of this people, he paused to remark particularly the influence exercised over them by the means of a *single Book*, comprehending alike their history, their law, and their religion. He no sooner (said he) opens this book, than he learns that this world is the creation of one God; and that the same God has created man in his own image, and endowed him with all those qualities of body and mind that befitted such an origin. If there were no corrobora-

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tion of this truth from other sources, reason alone would suffice to show, that there is more probability in this supposition,—that one great Being, a God, is the author of man, and of all things in the entire universe,—than in the various fancies which these same men have devised by their unaided reason. He is, however, arrested at this point by perceiving, in the delineation he has given of man, that he is now very far from possessing all those advantages which he enjoyed when he passed out of the hands of his Maker. But he does not remain long under this difficulty; for, as he pursues his study of the same book, he finds that, after man had been created by God in a state of innocence, and in the possession of every perfection, his first act was to rebel against his Creator, and employ the high qualifications he had received at his hand, as instruments of offence against him.

M. Pascal then went on to show that this crime, being in all its circumstances the most heinous that could have been committed, had been punished, not only in the person of this first man, but in his descendants also; to whom this first transgressor communicated his own misery, weakness, and corruption, and will continue so to communicate it, as long as time shall last.

He now pointed out various passages in the book, in which this truth is revealed. He called attention to the fact that, in it, man is never spoken of but with reference to this state of impotence and disorder; that in various parts it is stated, that all flesh is corrupt, that men have given themselves up to evil inclinations, and are prone to sin from their birth. He made his hearers remark, that this first fall is the source, not only of whatever is most

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inexplicable in man's nature, but also of a multitude of circumstances, external to him, and of which he knows not the causes. Finally, he showed that human nature is faithfully depicted throughout the book, and is in every respect conformable to the representation made by himself at the outset.

The speaker next proceeded to open the sources of consolation which the book contained. He pointed out the statements therein made, that the remedy for these evils must proceed from the hand of God; that he is willing to be entreated of by us for assistance; and engages even to provide a Deliverer for man,—one who shall make satisfaction in his stead, and supply his own deficiencies and impotence.

After making a number of forcible remarks upon this remarkable book, he desired them to notice, that it is the only one which has ever spoken in a becoming manner of the Supreme Being, and furnished any just idea of a religion entitled to credibility. He laid down for consideration the most obvious marks of such a system; applying them to that which the book in question inculcates; and he drew the especial attention of his auditors to a feature which he deemed the essence of true religion, —the *love* of the God which is professed to be adored;—a character, altogether peculiar to this one religious system, and which visibly distinguishes it from every other; whose falsehood is, in fact, apparent from the want of this essential feature.

Hitherto, M. Pascal, while preparing his hearer's minds, and insensibly leading them to his conclusions, had laid down no positive proofs of the truths he wished

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to establish; he, however, had brought them into a disposition to receive them with readiness, and even heartily to desire that those proofs might be found solid and well founded, inasmuch as they were so obviously conducive to the tranquillity of the spirit, and the clearing up of its uncertainties. They were in that state of mind, which would be natural to all reasonable persons following out such a train of reasoning as had been thus furnished; and it could be little doubted, that, after such a preparation, they would easily yield conviction to the arguments which their instructor next brought forward, to confirm and establish those important verities which form the foundation of the Christian religion.

Proceeding, then, to furnish a brief view of those proofs, after showing, generally, that the truths under discussion were really contained in this book, the authenticity of which no person of competent understanding could doubt, he paused principally upon the writings of Moses, in which these revelations are chiefly comprised; and he made it apparent, by a large number of indubitable coincidences, that it was equally impossible that Moses should have left on record a mere collection of falsehoods, and that the people to whom they were delivered, would have allowed themselves to be so imposed upon.

He then went over the principal Miracles recorded in the work; and as they are most important supports of the religious system taught therein, he proved it to be impossible that they should not be true; not only on the authority of the writings in which they are recorded, but from all the accompanying circumstances from which they derive corroboration.

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He next explained the figurative character of the entire law of Moses; showed how all that had befallen the Jewish nation was only a type of those truths which were accomplished at the coming of the Messiah; and that the veil which concealed these figures having been raised, it was easy to trace the accomplishment and perfect consummation of them, in favour of those who have received Jesus Christ.

M. Pascal next proceeded to prove the truth of religion from Prophecy; and on this head he enlarged more than on the preceding. Having made these questions the subject of deep study, and entertaining upon them certain views of a nature wholly original, he explained them with great clearness; he unfolded their meaning and fulfilment, with surprising exactitude, and brought them before his hearers in all their lucidness and force.

Lastly, after going through the Books of the Old Testament, and making various striking observations upon their contents, in reference to the fundamental evidences of revelation, he proceeded to those of the New Testament, and deduced from them also his crowning proofs of the truth of the Gospel.

He began with Christ; and although he had incontrovertibly established his divine mission out of the prophecies, and the symbols of the law, whose entire accomplishment centred in him, he adduced various evidences to the same effect, from his personal qualifications, his miracles, his doctrines, and all the circumstances of his life, and tenor of his actions.

He then descanted upon the character of the chosen Apostles; and, in order to establish the truth of the

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faith which they were commissioned universally to publish, after showing that they could only be charged with falsehood on one of two suppositions,—that they were deceivers themselves, or had in their turn been made dupes; he made it apparent that both these suppositions were equally impossible.

Finally, omitting nothing that could confirm the veracity of the Gospel history, he concluded with a variety of beautiful and impressive remarks upon the New Testament books themselves; — upon the style of the Evangelists, and their personal history; upon the Apostles, and their several writings; the multitude of Miracles, the Martyrs, and the Saints: in a word, on the various and copious evidences by which the Christian religion is so triumphantly established. And, although the limited nature of his discourse did not allow him to treat these various topics with all that copiousness which his projected work contemplated; what he brought forward was abundantly sufficient to prove, that all these things were no work of man; and that it was an Infinite Mind alone which could have devised the concurrence of so vast a multitude of events, for proving, in the most incontestable manner, the truth of that religion, which God himself came down from heaven to establish among men.

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The above is the substance of the discourse on this occasion, which was delivered to the assembled audience, only as an epitome of the great work which the speaker was contemplating; and it is from the reports of some persons present, that the small portion here furnished has been collected.

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# CONCLUSION.

In bringing the present volume to a close, it may be not uninteresting to take a brief retrospect of the diversified subjects it has presented to the reader; and hastily to retrace a road, which I venture to believe has been traversed not wholly without satisfaction or advantage.

The series opened with the slender remains of Pascal's Correspondence, which have escaped the vicissitudes of centuries, and have, for the most part, been only recently brought to light. These Letters admit us, after a lapse of time which enhances their interest, to many of the secrets of his own bosom, and to some pleasing scenes of his domestic circle. We find in them the records of sore disquietudes; and painfully trace the pressure of physical infirmity and a wounded spirit; yet all sustained with the meekness and patience which were his habitual characteristics. In the solemn reflections to which the bereavement of a revered parent gave rise, conveyed in language of almost unequalled eloquence, we learn the sources from which his own supports in sorrow were derived, and the solid grounds of scriptural doctrine and Christian hope, on which were placed the consolations he tenderly administered to the beloved relatives who shared his affliction. The chastened communications with his

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young and too attractive pupil,—that romantic episode, which at once gilds and saddens the records of his early years,—furnish us with touching glimpses of the blight of youthful hope and ambition which he then sustained; while we see, with admiration, the fond anticipations of earthly joy merged and swallowed up, in solicitude for the eternal interests of her, who had once been the object of his deep, but conquered attachment.

From the effusions of friendship and love, in epistolary confidence, we were brought to the more robust exercises of the philosopher and mathematician. It is here that Pascal is found on his strongest ground. In the fine delineation of the "Geometrical Spirit," we meet with the soundest rules of rigid definition, and incontrovertible demonstration. We are led on, from the simplest of geometrical propositions, to the great principles upon which the whole visible creation, in all its magnitude and minuteness, has been suspended by its mighty Maker; and lose ourselves, at length, in admiring contemplation of the infinitudes of time, motion, and space!

In the next of these treatises, connected with the exact sciences, we find laid down, with admirable simplicity and force, the limits within which a finite understanding should restrict its investigations. While the barriers which Revelation assigns to the knowledge and the capabilities of man are strictly imposed, the amplest field is laid open to his researches in human philosophy and science. It is shown, that the ages preceding our own have left this field unexhausted; and intelligence and curiosity are invited and encouraged to an unlimited progress.

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But what is this that meets us next in our review? Have we here another Ovid, laying down, anew, rules for the gratification of animal desires? Is it a revived Catullus, or an anticipated Moore, pouring out amatory effusions, redolent with sensuality, and stimulating to voluptuousness? Nothing of all this is the portraiture here presented of the "Passion of Love." We may, it is true, have paused upon some of the positions which even a Pascal has maintained upon this hazardous subject; and those who know themselves the best, will feel that they need rather rules for the moderation of passion, than vivid pictures, however chaste in conception and true to nature, of their overpowering ascendancy and universal sway. Yet who ever before, painted love with an intelligence so bright, and a philosophy so lofty? And where, in the pages of romance, are furnished more touching pictures of its hopes and its fears, its elation and its despondencies? But could it indeed be otherwise; for the hand is a master's, and the portrait is *himself!*

The "most eloquent of men" next lays down the rules by which the thoughts of a superior intellect should be clothed, in language most adapted to captivate the auditor or the reader. They are the rules, in fact, by means of which he himself gained resistless entrance into the minds of men; and of their truth and value, the concurrent testimony of his contemporaries to all that he uttered and wrote, and the approving verdict of posterity, furnish the best attestation.

We then come to the multitudinous fruits of learning, experience, and wisdom, which are laid up in one of

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the most copious collections of aphoristic writing that the literature of any language presents. We remember the comparatively brief term assigned to his earthly existence; and we are astonished at the mental power which had accumulated such rich and varied stores; and at that perfection of mental alchemy, by which the materials, thus collected, were elaborated into results so practical and so profound!

The youthful correspondent of learned sovereigns, laying at the feet of royalty the proud but fragile produce of early genius, is now seen devoting his more matured powers to the instruction of rank and influence, in its high responsibilities. With a graceful bias in favour of aristocratical distinctions, with the polish of the courtier, heightened and dignified by Christian sentiment, he assigns the respective duties, both of the possessors of high rank, and of their inferiors in station, towards each other. From the one he exacts no austere renunciation of the innocent advantages which Providence has assigned to their position; from the other, no sordid homage unworthy of independent men to bestow. And, with beautiful discrimination, he indicates, what are those qualifications in the great which entitle to an external consideration, and what the richer endowments of intelligence and virtue, which command the secret tribute of the heart. These lessons of wisdom and refinement derive their crowning interest, from our knowledge of the tender friendship entertained by the instructor for the distinguished young person, who was the primary object of his precepts.

The dialogue next turns upon the philosophical systems of the ancient and the (then) modern schools. The

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stream of pleasant discourse flows on amidst the tranquil shades of the Port Royal retreat;—those scenes sacred to learned repose, and pious meditation; which yet were, perhaps, sometimes sought by those, whom duty might have more beneficially left amongst the haunts of business, or in the discharge of social relations. In the graphic scene to which we are introduced, we might believe we were listening to the rich eloquence of Pascal, and the maturer wisdom of the venerable De Saci. We find set forth, the miserable rules of pride and self-dependence which were all that the heathen teacher could furnish, for the conduct of life, and the attainment of virtue; and are wholesomely instructed, by stern denunciations of those who, abusing the privileges of a purer theology, and a Divine revelation, have left men in the labyrinths of universal scepticism, and given them up to the resistless sway of their lusts and passions. In contrast with both, we have unfolded before us the Christian scheme, by which man's happiness and well-being in life, and hopes for eternity, are shown to be dependent upon his own improvement of those aids, which are offered to his acceptance by the hand of a just and beneficent Creator.

After this, we find ourselves admitted into another of those repositories, in which our author was accustomed to store the fruits of bis meditations, and the materials from which he elaborated his richest compositions. We proceed yet further, and find ourselves in an armoury of thought, strewed with missiles, and hung round with weapons of assault, and defence. There it was, that the skilful controversialist polished and fastened the armour, by which he baffled the fiercest assaults of his

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opponents; and here were winged and barbed those shafts, alternately of irony and indignation, which carried terror and defeat into their infuriated ranks. And lastly, we penetrate, as it were, into the very inner chamber of his self-communings; and listen to breathings of the spirit, which were, perhaps, never designed to meet any eye but his own. We see in them stern and resentful glances cast at the tyranny of Papal Bulls, and the arrogance of hierarchical power. We find reproachful contrasts drawn between these corruptions of later days, and the simplicity of Apostolic rule. We have questions raised, but left undetermined, upon the extent to which infallibility should be conceded to *man*. We listen to lamentations over the degeneracy of a church, which he yet could not renounce; and aspirations after a perfection, to which no human form of spiritual government is, probably, destined to attain. We contemplate, in short, a spirit ill at ease, restless and dissatisfied with all that the theology and the church around him presented; and ripe, perhaps, had longer life been given, to embrace a purer doctrine, and a more healthy discipline,—such as that which was fast spreading throughout neighbouring and more enlightened lands!

Yet all these topics, interesting and important as they were, were subordinated and eclipsed by that *one* great object to which the closing years of Pascal's life were devoted. To the noblest theme which could engage the thoughts or the pen of man, were now consecrated all his capacities, all his desires,—his toilsome days, and his watchful nights. To show the misery and hopelessness of man, without a voice and a guidance from heaven;

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to assert the authenticity and Divine authority of Scripture, in which that voice is heard; to silence, by the most copious evidences, internal and external, the cavils of atheism and infidelity against its revelations; to exhibit the necessities of man satisfied, and the types and prophecies which went before fulfilled, in the advent to our world, of a "God manifested in the flesh;" to show how our reconciliation with an offended Creator has been achieved by His sacrifice; and the gates of heaven and immortality opened to us by His resurrection:—

"To justify the ways of God to man;"

and to unfold the mighty scheme of the Eternal Mind in the creation of his moral universe;—these were the topics, enforced by eloquence, enriched by learning, elevated by philosophy, and carrying conviction to the heart, by a profound knowledge of man: this was the undertaking, in which all his intellectual powers were absorbed, with a continually increasing intenseness, as the close of his earthly career drew near.

To the completion of this task, he, in his own calculations, devoted, when he had scarcely attained to manhood, a large proportion of that which, on ordinary estimates of life, might be the residue of his existence. But it seemed good to the Great Disposer of events to exhibit, in the partial disappointment of his hope, a signal instance of the instability of human designs, even the holiest and the best. The great conception was matured; the outlines were fully drawn; the scenery began to live and glow; many portions were worked into finish and grace; the richer hues were about to be laid

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on, and the finer touches to be given;—when the hand of the artist was arrested, the pencil dropped; and the canvass remained,—incomplete, yet immortal!

The copious materials thus collected, have been, as is well known, largely augmented by those recent discoveries of which an account has already been given. These compositions, restored to their original integrity, have been found susceptible of a highly lucid grouping and arrangement, conformable, as far as can be ascertained with the writer's scheme; a scheme which, in all its perspicuity and comprehensiveness, has been handed down to us (as has been seen in the paper immediately preceding the present) from his own lips, and in his own expressions; and the whole combined, accompanied with his original expositions, leave now little to desire, to aid our conceptions of the scope and spirit of this great work. It is this collection which will form the principal cont ents of a subsequent volume; and I venture to believe, that the reader who has given his attention to the foregoing pages, will be not unwilling to accompany me in those that are to follow.

THE TRANSLATOR.

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# INDEX.

(SEE ALSO TABLE OF CONTENTS.)


PAGE.

ANNAT Père, (Provincial of the Society of Jesuits, and Confessor to Louis XIV.,) description of . . . . . 321
Antithesis, objection to, in composition . . . . . 175
Arnauld, a distinguished member of Port Royal, his condemnation by the Sorbonne . . . . . 20
Augustin, St. . . . . 25, &c.

Bacon, comparison of, with Pascal . . . . . 107
Bauny Père, (one of the Jesuit Casuists,) "burner of barns." . . 318
Bossut, Abbé, his edition of Pascal . . . . . xxv
Bourdelot, M. de, (Physician to Queen Christina,) Discourse on Arithmetical Machine addressed to . . . . . 63

Casimir, John, King of Poland, allusion to . . . . . 201
Charles I., (England,) allusion to the dethronement of . . . 201
Christina, Queen of Sweden, letter to, with Arithmetical Machine, 62; allusion to the abdication of . . . . . 201
Cicero, his false beauties. . . . . 180
Comets, their nature unknown when Pascal wrote . . . . 118
Condorcet, his edition of Pascal, xxiv; *éloge* on Pascal . . xxiv
Corneille, quotation from (Horatii) . . . . . 185
Cousin, M. Victor, his comments upon Pascal's sentiments, &c. xxxii
Cromwell, cause of his death . . . . . 199
Cyran, St., letter "De la Vocation," reference to, in letter from Pascal to Madame Perier, 9; quotation from . . . . . 10

Dacier, Madame, on poetry, (Trans. Horace) . . . . . 182
Descartes, Pascal's opinions upon his Philosophical System . . 298
Desmolets, Père, edition of Pascal . . . . . xxi
Domat, (friend of Pascal,) note in his hand-writing . . . 211

Eloquence, definition of . . . . . 173
Epaminondas, his bravery . . . . . 205
Epictetus, comparison with Montaigne . . . . . 179
Escobar, (a celebrated Jesuit Casuist,) his writings read twice over by Pascal, 297; referred to . . . . . 329
Euclid, why he has not placed unity among numbers . . . 92

Fontaine, member of Port Royal, 148; his account of Pascal's Conversation on Epictetus and Montaigne . . . . 273

Gas, M. du, (member of Port Royal,) reference to, in letter to Mademoiselle de Roannez . . . . . 21, 23
Guerrier, P., MSS. . . . . xxvii

*Heretics*, (so styled by Pascal,) compared with Jansenists, and remark thereon . . . . . 318

Inquisition, and Society of Jesuits, scourges of the Truth. . . 313




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PAGE.
Laporte, M., Physician at Clermont . . . . . 42
Laval, M. de, Work on Psalms . . . . . 20
Léon, St., quotation from . . . . . 26
Lessius, (Jesuit Casuist,) opposed to Moline, doctrine of husbands and wives, &c. . . . . 316

Maitre le, Member of Port Royal . . . . . 148
Martial, his Epigrams . . . . . 179
Menjot M., reference to . . . . . 38
Miton, reference to . . . . . 210
Mohatra, contract of. (Provincial Letters VIII.) . . . . 320
Molina, (Jesuit Casuist,) doctrine of husbands and wives . . . 316
Montaigne, Pascal's opinions upon, &c. . . . . 78, 177, 178

Nicole, Member of Port Royal, 148; his account of Pascal's Discourse on the Condition of the Great . . . . . 261
Noël, P., (Jesuit,) Pascal's controversy with him on Vacuum . . 79

Pascal, Stephen, (father of Blaise,) letter on his death, 42; letter (postscript to) from him . . . . . 61
Pascal, Jacqueline, (sister of Blaise,) letters to, 5, &c.; her acting as amanuensis to Pascal . . . . . 13
Perier, M., (brother-in-law of Pascal,) his country-house at Bienassis, Clermont, 18; letter to, 39; letter to, on death of father 42
Perier, Madame, (sister of Pascal,) letters to . . . . . 14, 60
Perier, Marguerite, (niece of Pascal,) supposed miracle upon . . 24
Pope, easily led into error, &c. . . . . 315
Port Royal, account of Pascal's introduction to, 5; Nuns of Port Royal . . . . . 333
Puy-de-dôme, Pascal's experiments on Vacuum there . . . 105
Puys, M., his dispute with the Jesuits. (Provincial Letters XV.) . 357

Rebours, M., Governor of Port Royal, and pupil to the Abbé St. Cyran; Pascal's interview with him . . . . . 7
Roannez, Duke de, friend of Pascal, 23; remark by . . . 191
Roannez, Mademoiselle, Pascal's early attachment to, xxxv.; letters to 20

Sablé, Marquise de, Letter to . . . . . 38
Saci, de, Member of Port Royal, quotation from in letter to Madame Perier . . . . . 27
Swiss, their mode of conferring office . . . . . 199

Trent, Council of: Priests committing mortal sin; "*quam primum*" . 319

Vacuum, Treatise on, lost . . . . . 105
Vallant, MSS. of . . . . . 192
Victoria, Her Majesty the Queen, reference to, in relation to the "Pearl of Days" . . . . . 66
Villemain, M. de, his assistance to M. Faugère in his edition of Pascal . . . . . xxix
Voltaire, his edition of the Pensées, xxi.; specimen of his Notes to do. xxiii

Xavier, St. (Chief of Jesuits) . . . . . 326, 345

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